THE CHURCH AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

SPINKA

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THE CHURCH AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

BY

MATTHEW SPINKA, PH.D.

THE CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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DEDICATED TO

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IN APPRECIATION OF HIS UNFAILING FRIENDSHIP

FOREWORD

The epochal changes which revolutionized the very foundations of Russian life had a rousing effect upon the rest of the world. Where changes of such magnitude and far-reaching consequences are concerned, it is inevitable that the movement causing them be both extolled and condemned by doctrinaires of opposite tempers, without either much critical regard for the exact course of events, or much historical discrimination of them. Hence, before any judgment worthy of respect may be passed upon such a cataclysmic event, it is imperative for a careful investigator to make sure of the exact facts upon which to base his opinions and conclusions.

The fierce antagonism to the Soviet régime, characteristic of many works dealing with the Russian Revolution, found ample expression in the hitherto published scanty and fragmentary treatment of the Russian church during the revolutionary era. The present work is animated by the sole desire to gather the primary historical source material which would be fairly representative of both the governmental as well as the ecclesiastical sides, and to present the course of events in the light of this evidence. The aim sought is a sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the conflicting interests which inevitably produced the deplorable strife into which the parties to the conflict were hurled, for a study of the actual situation is vastly more profitable than any amount of debate regarding

the merits or demerits of the respective philosophies involved. The book does not aim to justify or condemn the opposing principles, but to present them in the light of their historical development, which produced the situation where conflict between them was inevitable. It is sincerely hoped that this mode of presentation may contribute toward a more critical, and therefore more equitable, appraisal of the present Russian ecclesiastical realities.

Certain problems peculiar to this particular type of investigation were encountered in the process: in the matter of dating, it should be borne in mind that the dates appearing in this book were left as given in their respective sources, for the author found it impossible to determine in every instance which calendar had been used. The Soviet government adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1918; the second Local Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, representative of the reformist groups, likewise adopted, in 1923, the calendar in use in the West; but the patriarchal party, representative of some two-thirds of the Russian church, still adheres to the old calendar, which is thirteen days behind the Gregorian.

Another problem concerned the transliteration of the Russian alphabet. The system used in this work is, in the main, the one adopted by the British Conference of University Teachers of Russian and Slavonic Languages, for this mode is much less cumbersome than the so-called Library of Congress scheme.

The author takes this opportunity to thank Dr. Sherwood Eddy, of New York, for his friendly aid in securing the Russian visé; also the splendid staff of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, in Moscow, for arranging interviews with impor-

tant state officials. Invaluable help was likewise given, both by opening the archives to the author and by private conferences, by many high dignitaries of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the patriarchal party of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia as well as in this country.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made to the editors of *The Journal of Religion* and of *The Religious Education* for the permission to use some sections of the text which had previously appeared in these magazines. Sincere thanks are likewise rendered to Dr. Carl S. Patton of the Chicago Theological Seminary, who read and corrected the text in proof.

THE AUTHOR.

The Chicago Theological Seminary
May 9, 1927

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to discuss impartially policies with which one differs. Particularly is this true in the case of religion, and most difficult of all where a complete social philosophy is involved. This is very likely the reason why we have been given such varying pictures of the religious condition of Russia. It is hard for an observer to detach himself from his own sympathies and shape his opinions by facts alone. Inability to use the Russian language compels most English and American observers to rely upon second-hand information and, at best, translations of various discussions and official documents. This places the observer very much at the mercy of other people's prejudices and interests.

Dr. Spinka has written a work which, in my opinion, is an exception to these generalities. A master of the Russian language, he has been able to examine material inaccessible in translation. In a recent visit to Russia he was able to gain information from many persons at first hand, and an historical training has guided him in the use of material. Naturally he has his own convictions as an American Protestant, but he has sincerely attempted to look at the Russian situation as an historian rather than as a critic or as a champion of either Bolshevism or Russian Christianity. As a result his work is a well-balanced introduction to a study of a very complicated and delicate

situation. It cannot fail to give the American reader much needed information and a point of view from which to interpret the facts Dr. Spinka gives so generously.

SHAILER MATHEWS.

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THE CHURCH AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE ROOTS OF THE MATTER

The Great War, so staggeringly costly in human life and treasure, was likewise profligate of spiritual values. The ghastly beastliness which it revealed served to manifest to the startled world that the dominating elemental passions of the so-called Christian nations, which nevertheless were not nations of Christians, were utterly pagan, and that the "Christian" civilization of which they all boasted was but skin-deep, and failed to penetrate into and affect the soul of the European peoples. The frank and brutal disregard of Christian ideals and practice, and worst of all, the general hearty and even enthusiastic moral support which the national churches loyally manifested in a multitude of unmistakable ways, glaringly illuminated the fact that the dominant passions which actuated the imperialistic states were shared by the Christian church as well. For ever and ever, the fact that the church was permeated with the shamelessly pagan spirit of greed for power which dominated the Western imperialistic policies must be acknowledged by the followers of the Great Teacher as one of the most serious cases of disloyalty and unfaithfulness to his gospel.

The fearful price which in consequence the church was called upon to pay for its subservience to the imperialistic and militaristic state policies was nowhere revealed with greater clarity than in Russia, where the tsarist caesaropapism was likewise at its worst. The whole Christian world was startled and shocked with the fateful consequences of that situation, for the swift and terrible vengeance which overtook the tsarist church along with the tsarist state was wreaked indiscriminately upon the guilty and the innocent. Ultimately, the fiery scourge which purged the Russian church and burned away so much, may prove, and indeed is quite likely to prove, to have been a blessing in disguise. But such catastrophic upheavals are costly in human suffering, and the fire of destruction rages indiscriminately, reducing to ashes the rotten as well as that which was well worth preserving. It is utterly futile to raise the question whether the urgently needed reform of that communion could not come in a less destructive way: historical forces, like natural laws, are pitiless in their unrestrainable onward rush, and where wind has been sown for so many centuries so generously, who can wonder that a whirlwind should finally arise?

To many Westerners, so little and imperfectly informed about the conditions which prevailed under the former Russian tsarist autocracy, it appeared that the Russian church was overtaken by a swift and inexplicable doom, as when a hurricane suddenly swoops upon the coast of Florida, wrecking its cities and scattering the ruins all along the shore. But in reality, there was actually nothing sudden about the Russian hurricane. The storm had been brewing for many decades, and the rumble of the revolutionary thunders

was heard long before the storm broke out into fury. To understand the situation in which the church found itself after the October Revolution of 1917, it is necessary to trace the causes of the revolt against the church in the history of the nineteenth century. Hence, a brief review of these movements must be presented.

First of all, it must be understood that Russia, religiously speaking, is a world by itself. It is Christian, but its Christianity is Byzantine to begin with, and besides remained untouched by the influences both of the Renaissance and the Reformation movements. It was largely free of the legalisms of Latin Christianity, but its petrified Byzantinism, redolent with mystical piety and superstitious ceremonialism, was essentially medieval, other-worldly, ascetic, and mythological. It may be said to be much nearer to the Christianity of the early centuries, in the sense that it retained the atmosphere of supernaturalism and magic as its native air. Thus its uneducated masses are only half Christian, the larger half of their religious attitude being of a pre-Christian quality. The same judgment is expressed by no less a historian of the Russian cultural life than Paul N. Milyukov in his classical *Essays upon the History of the Russian Culture.*[1]

The official orthodoxy prided itself upon the preservation of the Greek theological system, as worked out by John of Damascus in the eighth century, essentially unchanged, unprogressive and reactionary. Fundamentally, it differed but little, as far as the temper of its doctrine was concerned, from Western Catholicism; it regarded the dogmas of the church as "revealed truth," and as such they were held to be

[1] Prague, 1903; part II, Chapter V.

absolutely without error, unsusceptible of either addition, subtraction, development, or reinterpretation. The belief in these dogmas was necessary to salvation; the sacraments were regarded as mediating objective grace in a truly magical manner and were defined essentially in the Roman Catholic sense. This authoritarian system was imposed upon the clergy and the believers, and on the whole has been accepted, by the great majority, unquestioningly and implicitly, with even less desire for a rational apprehension of the articles of belief than has been the case in the Western communions. The mentality of the official church had been well represented by the opinions of the notorious ober-procuror of the Holy Synod at the end of the nineteenth century (1880-1905), Constantine P. Pobedonostsev. He rejected all rationalism as the fatal disease of Western Europe, and proudly offered the Byzantine mysticism and mystagogism in its stead. The absolute truth cannot be clearly, logically formulated or reasoned out; it must be intuitively apprehended. The Christian truth is thus mystically mediated through the Orthodox cult, and in consequence the believer is in possession of the absolute truth. Logic is the work of the devil. "The spread of popular education is positively harmful." [2]

Another representative of this official Byzantinism was a monk, Constantine N. Leontev (1831-91). The true Christianity for Leontev was the ascetic otherworldliness of the monks and the nuns. The world—as well as man—is utterly corrupt. Since man is corrupt, he cannot be expected freely to believe in God; therefore, "we must force ourselves to believe in

[2] T. G. Massaryk: *The Spirit of Russia,* Vol. II, Part II, p. 286. (In Czech.)

God."[3] Others, of course, must likewise be forced. God cannot be known through reason or the moral sense, but only by mystical intuition; science and philosophy can give us no true knowledge of God, and are in reality enemies of all true religion. Therefore, illiteracy is Russia's great good fortune. Russians must be preserved from the sins of European civilization, for thus alone can they retain purity of faith; Russia must therefore be permitted "to freeze."

But along with this obscurantist dogmatism of Orthodoxy, the Russian church was expected to serve as the spiritual police of the autocratic state. This probably was the greatest spiritual wrong which it had suffered. It had always been in subjection to the tsars, with just a few exceptions which only served to accentuate the rule, but since the days of Peter the Great, who could not tolerate even a possibility of the revival of the pretensions of some Patriarch Nikon, the church was effectually subjugated by the creation of the Holy Governing Synod (1721). By this device, the tsar became, in matters civil, the autocratic governor of the church as well as of the state. It is often said that the tsar was not the head of the Russian church. The exact scope of his office may be seen from the *Fundamental Laws* of the state, revised on May 6, 1906. Paragraph 4 states that the tsar of all the Russias wields an autocratic power. To obey his supreme rule not only out of fear, but because of duty dictated to us by conscience, is advised by God himself. Paragraph 64 defines that the Russian tsar, being a Christian ruler, is the supreme protector and guardian of the dogmas of the Greek-Russian faith, and supervises orthodoxy and good order in the holy church. It is in the sense of a "bishop of

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

exterior affairs" that he is called the head of the church. Katkov, the outstanding journalist of the reactionary theocracy of the nineteenth century, described the tsar's theocratical standing in these glowing terms:

All power has its derivation from God; the Russian tsar, however, was endowed with a special significance, distinguishing him from the rest of the world's rulers. He is not only the tsar of his land and the leader of his people but has been designated by God to be the guardian and custodian of the Orthodox church. The Russian tsar is more than an heir to his ancestors, he is a successor to the Cæsars of the Eastern Empire, the builders of the church and its conclaves, the founders of the very creed of the Faith of Christ. With the fall of Byzantium, Moscow arose and the grandeur of Russia began. Herein lies the mystery of the deep distinction between Russia and all the nations of the world.[4]

The appointment to the Holy Synod was ultimately in the hands of the tsar. The original *Regulations* provided for a council of twelve, consisting of both clerical and lay members. But soon by custom the lay members were excluded, with the exception of the ober-procuror, who was the tsar's direct representative. This official, in the course of time, became a practical dictator. The decrees of the Synod became valid only upon the signature of the tsar, but were presented to the tsar only by the ober-procuror, who could veto the synodical decree, or could merely refrain from presenting it to his imperial master, whereupon it automatically lapsed. Down to 1905, the members of the Holy Synod could not even communicate with the emperor

[4] In *Moskovskya Vedomosti,* Nov. 8, 1882; quoted in Olgin: *The Soul of the Russian Revolution,* New York, 1917, p. 58.

save through the ober-procuror. Needless to say that the ober-procurors were carefully selected men, of trusted loyalty and proven pliability, through whom the entire Holy Synod became but a state department for ecclesiastical affairs, on a par with the other departments of the governmental machinery. The ober-procuror virtually had the power of choosing the members of the body, for the emperor made his appointments from the list nominated by the procuror. Four members of the Synod held their office not by reason of appointment, but because they occupied the chief metropolitanates in Russia, those of Moscow, Petersburg, and Kiev, together with the exarchate of Georgia. But since these exalted cathedras were filled by imperial appointment, and always carried with them a seat in the Holy Synod, it was merely a more indirect way of appointing to the governing body. It was in this fashion that the ober-procuror, who was really the tsar's minister for ecclesiastical affairs, and was responsible to him alone, possessed the power to choose the members of the body, and wielded control over them which willy-nilly made them but mere puppets in his hands.

The primary qualification of this chief executive and judicial official of the Russian church was, of course, his devotion to the tsar and subservience to the policy of making the church the mainstay of the state. For example, Constantine P. Pobedonostsev, who held the office from 1880 to 1905, was a reactionary of the deepest dye. But especially enlightening is the case of the associate ober-procuror, Prince N. D. Zhevakhov, who served during the World War to the end of the tsarist monarchy, for his type goes far to explain the violent reaction of the revolutionaries against the church. He

reveals himself to us in his *Reminiscences* [5] as a personality naïvely mystical and superstitious, as well as bigotedly monarchical. He actually believed, and persuaded the empress to share his "faith," that the Great War continued to rage because an icon of St. Joasaph had not been paraded along the army front, as this saint had ordered in a dream! Only upon the condition that the icon be exhibited would God have mercy upon Russia and the world and stop the war! [6]

His monarchism may be seen from a few examples of his own expressions. In an audience with the tsarina he reports himself as having said to her:

> One of the greatest errors of the present time is the idea of parliamentarism, hostile to the idea of the imperial rule, proclaiming the principle of the collective mind. Collective mind does not exist at all. There is a leader, and there is the mob blindly entrusting itself to that leader and following him. Such a leader is to be found in the tsar, the Anointed of God, as he leads the people in the paths of God's law and brings down upon his people the blessing of God. The undermining of the sacred bases of Autocracy began long ago, but it never originated among the masses of the people, but always in the mind of some evil-intentioned person. . . . The manifesto of October 17, 1905, proclaiming the founding of the governmental Duma was forced from the tsar by a small group of such evil-intentioned individuals, who intimidated the government by the threat of a revolution.[7]

Describing an occasion upon which he saw the tsar attending a church service, Prince Zhevakhov waxed

[5] N. D. Zhevakhov: *Reminiscences,* Vol. I, Munich, 1923. (In Russian.)
[6] *Ibid.,* pp. 33, 50.
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 83.

melodramatic: "With what a love I looked upon the tsar, with what a pain I read in the sad expression of his wonderful eyes the torment and suffering which the tsar carries on his shoulders on account of the sins of Russia. . . ." [8] It may be presumed that the world at present knows fairly well whose sins it was that the tsar had carried on his shoulders! And it was such a man as Zhevakhov that headed the Russian church during the fearful period of the Great War!

Appointment to the episcopal sees throughout Russia was in the hands of the Holy Synod, which, of course, was guided in its choice by the ober-procuror. It was this very completely centralized church government which made the tsar well-nigh all-powerful in the church, as he was in the state, and made the church so abjectly subservient to his autocratic dictates. The bishops were elevated to their high office, and could hope for further promotion only as they made themselves pleasing to the government. It was for this reason that transferring of bishops from one see to another was of frequent occurrence. Thus, for instance, Bishop Yakovlev of Yaroslavl was transferred no less than five different times within thirteen years (1892-1904).[9] No wonder the bishops did not know the problems of their immense dioceses! They did not have time even to become acquainted with them.

With the dominance of this frankly autocratic ecclesiastical polity, in which no suggestion of a democratic, representative system was discernible, it is not difficult to understand that the church organization has been systematically exploited in the interests of political autocracy and absolutism. The religious training of

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[9] F. Haase: *Die Religiöse Psyche des Russisches Volkes*, p. 54.

Russians of all classes was consciously and persistently directed toward instilling in them ideas of the divine prerogatives of the imperial autocrat, through whom God carries out His will for Russia, as well as of the obligation of passive obedience to his commands on the part of the people. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this ideological basis of the tsarist power, and the government was keenly alive to its value. The church was the surest and stoutest prop of the theocratic absolutism; it was the spiritual police of the state.

The spiritual condition of the vast masses of the Russian peasants and workers was deplorable. They were kept in dense ignorance (which in the opinion of Leontev was so beneficial for them), and their religious concepts were hardly above superstition and magic. The very heart of the Russian peasant's religion was his worship of the images—the icons—and the relics from which he expected relief from his many ills; and next to this was his belief in the magical powers of the sacraments, with which his concept of "salvation" was identified. There were no less than 241 officially recorded "miracle-working" sacred icons, among which the various representations of the *Mother of God* predominate. But aside from these, there are innumerable shrines with various sacred paraphernalia, which are all objects of veneration. Let anyone who wishes to observe this practice but go to Moscow to the most celebrated shrine of the Iverian Virgin, standing under the very walls of the Kremlin, and see the type of devotion exhibited there. Secure in his naïve beliefs in the mythological and mystagogic Byzantinism, the muzhik was "safe" both for the tsarist autocracy and the Orthodox church.

Even though the Russian masses were thus secured in the thraldom of autocracy and superstition, the educated classes could not be kept segregated within the limits of the official system, and could not be rendered immune from the cultural influences of Western Europe. The educated nineteenth-century Russia was obliged to face the problems which the philosophy and the science of the day had raised. Having no native, ripe culture of their own, Russians were ill prepared to assimilate the conclusions which elsewhere were the fruit of an indigenous, slow-maturing cultural process. Therefore the results of attempting to do so were often startlingly violent and violently startling. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, educated Russia became thoroughly imbued with the spirit and opinions of Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, and later with the German idealistic philosophy, especially that of Schelling, Hegel, and Feuerbach, as well as with the materialism of Vogt, the positivism of Comte, and the evolutionary agnosticism of Spencer.

The reaction of the intelligentsia to the Western world-view produced various movements sharply differentiated from one another. In general, they may be divided into two classes: those which saw the salvation of Russia in the acceptance of the Western culture —the Westerners; and those which regarded the European culture as thoroughly decadent, and insisted that Russia must create her own culture, quite unlike that of the West, out of her own native elements. These latter were known as the Slavophils.

The Slavophil party comprised educated Russians of rather narrowly nationalistic tendencies. The nineteenth century witnessed an awakening of nationalistic consciousness among many previously somnolent peo-

ples, or such as were rendered comatose by the wily drugging carried on by others, and in most cases their awakening was accompanied with an abnormal nationalistic emphasis, often amounting to chauvinism, which manifested itself among them. Similarly in Russia: Slavophilism united an ardent, emotional patriotism or nationalism with an equally zealous, somewhat uncritical valuation of the Russian Orthodox Church, even though tempered by a certain amount of cautious criticism of the excesses of official ecclesiasticism. To them a hundred-percent Russianism was indissolubly connected with a zealous profession of the Orthodox tenets and an ecstatic admiration of the Old-Slavonic cultus. In his philosophical discussion of *The Meaning of History,* Nicholas Berdyaev describes the movement in these apt words:

> The whole Slavophil movement was imbued with hatred not so much of the European culture as of the European civilization. The thesis "the West is decaying" signified that the great European culture was dying, and that the soulless, godless European civilization had become victorious. . . . The struggle of Russia with Europe, of the East with the West, represented a struggle of the spirit with unspirituality, or religious culture with irreligious civilization. They (the Slavophils) wished to believe that Russia would not go the way of civilization, but would follow her own path, her own destiny, that in Russia alone a culture on religious bases was possible—a genuine spiritual culture.[10]

The Slavophil party was, therefore, religiously very important, for in spite of its blind devotion to the

[10] Nicholas Berdyaev: *The Meaning of History,* Berlin, 1923, p. 250. (In Russian.)

national church, it produced or influenced the leading religious thinkers of modern Russia. Hence it would be fitting and proper, in the interests of a just evaluation of the Russian religious situation as a whole, to present a brief résumé of this school of thought as well as the related mystical schools, for they were all rather closely connected in principle, if not always in method.

The founder of the Slavophil party was Ivan V. Kireyevsky (1806-1855), who taught that Russia was essentially different from Europe, in as much as the foundations of Russian culture were to be sought in the mystical faith of the Russian Christianity, while those of European culture manifested themselves in her rationalistic sciences and her positivistic philosophy. The Russian church, untouched by these corrosive influences, had alone preserved Christianity in its mystical, intuitive apprehension of the absolute truth as revealed in the Orthodox dogmas as well as in the cultus; as such, Russian Christianity had the exalted task of restoring to the original purity of the teaching and spirit of Christ the churches of Western Europe, both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant.

Another exponent of the Slavophil dogma of Russian messianism was found in A. S. Khomyakov (1804-1860), who proved to be a remarkable theological systematizer and exponent of the movement, as well as a keen polemicist against both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. His program likewise comprised the familiar thesis: Europe is decaying; we must save it! The political economist of the party was found in Constantine Aksakov (1817-1860), who advocated a system of theocracy. Politically, the creed of Slavophilism, as expressed by Danilevsky in that Bible of later Slavophilism, *Russia and Europe,* defined the task of

Russia as consisting of the unification of all Slavic nations in a pan-Slavic federation, and at the head of the united Slavic world as rescuing Constantinople from the hands of the Turk. The ancient capital of the Byzantine Empire was then to be restored to the headship of Eastern Orthodoxy under the aegis of Russia. Even a most elementary knowledge of the policies of the Russian government during the World War suffices to reveal the startling similarities between the official and the Slavophil policies; but it ought to be added that official Russia was a great deal more interested in securing a free outlet from the Black Sea than in making Constantinople the ecclesiastical head of the East! Incidentally, it helps to reveal the close connection between the slogans and policies of the movement so deeply religious as was Slavophilism, and the official imperialistic expansionist politics of the state.

Slavophilism affected the best religious minds of Russia from that time on, and thus was religiously much more fruitful and important than its opponent, the Westernist party. Even though held with many important modifications by the later thinkers, yet the influence which these ideas exerted was great. Among those deeply affected by Slavophilism is to be counted the most genuinely Russian of the great modern writers of that nation, Theodore M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881), whose thought gave an impulse and direction to the best minds in the Russian church; and they, in turn, afford at least a moderate promise of intellectual and spiritual reorientation within that vast communion.

Dostoevsky has been called the "father of modern Russian religious thought," and the "Russian Dante." The problems with which he was eternally occupied

were at bottom religious problems. In everything he wrote, he was wrestling with the questions raised by nihilism: a denial of faith in God and the godman, and the Western humanistic affirmation of man, or the superman, the mangod. He was constantly asking himself the question: What becomes of the man who had lost all sense of objective responsibility and duty, and who wishes to be a law unto himself, affirming for himself moral solipsism? One may read his *Crime and Punishment,* or *The Possessed,* or his masterpiece, *The Brothers Karamazov,* and everywhere find the thinker wrestling with this central problem. His answer rings out clearly that man either finds his salvation by becoming a godman, or destroys himself in an attempt to become a mangod. Either Christ or Smerdyakov; for if there be no God, then all things are permitted. That is the lesson of his *Brothers Karamazov.* The theme of theanthropy, *i.e.* of God incarnating himself in man, runs like a dominant note through most of the modern Russian progressive thought—the theme of the deification of the human, of salvation by incarnation, in opposition to the anthropocentric emphasis of the West.

In the next place, Dostoevsky emphasizes the moral nature of man, his moral freedom, which to him meant primarily the consciousness of moral responsibility. His "dark" heroes show how an abuse of this most essential characteristic of man as a moral being leads to self-destruction, because of its perversion into license. But the possibility of evil is necessary in order that man may freely and of his own choice prefer good to evil. Thus this is a universe the chief object of which is the production of moral beings who would freely and out of intelligent conviction choose good, persistently and con-

sistently, because they know the power of evil which leads to self-destruction. This, then, is the process of salvation, or in other words, the process of development of moral personalities. The way to character is only through suffering, through overcoming evil, through a voluntary choice of good. The great fact of free will is the greatest human tragedy, because of the possibility of its abuse, but it is likewise the absolutely necessary means toward the greatest good.

As for Western Christianity or culture, Dostoevsky regarded both as uncongenial to the growth and development of such a free personality as he portrayed in his idealized Christian character, and on that score opposed Westernism bitterly. In his overvaluation of the task and destiny of Russian Christianity, he often exposed himself to the charge of chauvinism, for he expected the regeneration of all Western Europe to proceed solely from his "God-incarnating" nation.

But it was only with Vladimir S. Solov'ev (1853-1900) that Russia produced her outstanding religious philosopher of modern times, the founder of her school of speculative mysticism. He had affinities both with the Slavophils and Dostoevsky, but he was too thoroughly religious to identify himself with a movement which was primarily nationalistic in character; moreover, in distinction from Dostoevsky, although Solov'ev combated the same Western foe as the great novelist did, he was much more clearly conscious of the inadequacy of the official theology than the former. He developed a speculative system of his own, wherein in many features he departed from the traditional doctrines. It is essentially mystical, but he believed that reason may be an aid to a fuller understanding of the mysteries of the divine economy; in this respect he dif-

fers from the school of alogical mysticism, which despairs of any aid the reason may give in the search for truth, and consequently rests its case entirely with the intuitive, immediate, practical approach to God.

Solov'ev conceived the task of religion to consist in joining the human life with the divine, or to turn the phrase about, in the incarnation of the divine in the human. This would result in the formation of a theanthropic personality, or a process of deification, but without any implication that the human would cease to be human or become exclusively divine, but rather that the combination of the two would form a divine-human entity. This transformatory process, although God-initiated, cannot be accomplished without voluntary, intelligent human coöperation. "Thus religion is a divine-human affair."[11]

Incarnation was regarded by him as the proper mode of redemption and salvation for all men, and this feature forms the chief difference in the theological formulation of this particular doctrine between the East and the West, for Solov'ev followed the best and the most ancient traditions of the East in the matter. The incarnation is not an isolated phenomenon, but the uniform method of salvation of all men. The Western dogmas of juridical justification of the Anselmic satisfaction theory, or the substitutionary atonement of the older Protestant theology, were rejected as "opposed both to a philosophical apprehension as well as all truly Christian feeling."[12]

But equally important in Solov'ev's system was his insistence upon the human free will, upon a free and

[11] *Collected Works* of V. S. Solov'ev, Vol. III, *The Spiritual Bases of Life,* St. Petersburg, p. 270. (In Russian.)

[12] Solov'ev, *op., cit,* Vol. III, *Discourses about Theanthropy,* p. 152.

voluntary as well as intelligent acceptance of the theanthropic process, and an unconstrained coöperation with it on the part of the human agent. This saving process, resulting in a theanthropic personality, is the method of individual salvation. The church is composed of such theanthropic individuals, and is destined to become coextensive with mankind. The goal of cosmic history is "the incarnation of the divine idea in the world."

Passing then to a discussion of the historic Christian communions, Solov'ev manifested the characteristic Slavophil aversion to the Western forms of Christianity, although with most significant and important modifications. Indeed, far from rejecting them, he only pointed out what he considered to be their erroneous overemphasis upon rightful, and in fact necessary, principles; and far from exalting his own above the rest, he held that a perfect, full-orbed, all-harmonious Christianity can be obtained only by a synthesis, or a union, of all the ideal elements of the various communions of Christendom. In this respect, then, Solov'ev represented a synthesis between the concepts of the Slavophils and those of the religious Westerners.

His chief criticism of Roman Catholicism rested upon its attempt to establish the divine economy in the world by force. This he regarded as an essential denial of the very heart of Christ's gospel, that love and truth are stronger than evil and error. The kingdom of God could not be imposed upon an unwilling humanity by force; it must be intelligently understood and voluntarily accepted. [13]

The historical justification of Protestantism was to be found in its opposition to just this rule of force in

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

spiritual matters, this program of enforced salvation. Protestantism demanded full rights for a free spiritual personality. But the only criterion it set up was the Bible, and the consequent need of interpretation of it called forth the activity of the individual reason, which in the end became the standard of religious truth. Thus Protestantism naturally tended toward subjectivism and rationalism, which found its purest expression in Hegelianism. Consequently, it set itself against many tenets of the revealed truth as held by Catholic Christionity. Hence both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant communions erred in part, one in the direction of denying freedom to the individual conscience, and the other in the opposite direction of denying rightful authority.

The Eastern churches, on the contrary, avoided both these faults, and thus have preserved the Christian truth intact, although they have never realized it in a true Christian culture. Nevertheless, the ideal church must comprise not only the orthodox Catholic tenets, but also a single, corporate, unified ecclesiastical organization and rule; in other words, it must be a synthesis of the various fundamental principles of all historic Christian communions. This conviction made Solov'ev the chief exponent of the idea of church union.

It was this aspect of Solov'ev's program which aroused against him the greatest amount of opposition on the part of the ecclesiastical officialdom. He stated the case for union of Christendom in his book entitled *The Great Controversy and Christian Politics,*[14] in which he defined the goal of Christian politics as that of bringing about a free union of humanity in the church of Christ. He freely acknowledged as valid and

[14] Solov'ev: *op. cit.*, Vol. IV.

indispensable the great idea of Roman Catholicism—centralized authority, order, and discipline. This centralization of authority is needful for the whole church, and since it is already established within the Roman communion, it should be freely and voluntarily acknowledged and accepted for themselves by the remaining communions as necessary for the highest efficiency, but must not be imposed or enforced upon any unwilling branch of the church. The Eastern church, on the other hand, has always placed emphasis upon preservation of the purity of the dogmatic system —orthodoxy—and in so far has done right. This special contribution of the Eastern churches should likewise be freely accepted by the rest of Christendom.

We, Easterners, are right in defending the sanctity of ecclesiastical tradition; the Catholics are right in defending the unity and independence of ecclesiastical rule. Both we and they are more or less guilty of unwillingness to acknowledge the inseparableness of these elements in the *plenum* of ecclesiastical life, the equal necessity of both for the perfection of the church.[15]

In spite of the fundamentally mystical character of Solov'ev's concept of Christianity—for he did not derive his conclusions from reason alone, nor from the moral or religious sense, but defined it in essentially mystical terms as a process of theanthropy—he believed that it could be stated and apprehended in logical terms. In this respect he was followed by Prince Eugene N. Trubetskoy (1865-1919), who was his chief modern disciple. Prince Trubetskoy developed his concept of Christianity in his work on *The Meaning of*

[15] *The Great Controversy and Christian Politics,* p. 103.

Life.[16] In this book we find the familiar outlines of a theological system very similar to that of Solov'ev's, although it is presented in a more philosophical terminology. The godman, the theanthropic personality, is to him the goal of all evolution, as it was to Solov'ev. It is interesting to notice in this connection the conclusion that he drew from the doctrine of incarnation: he attempted to justify the use of sacred pictures, the icons, against the aspersions of Protestants, by advancing the argument that they were concrete affirmations of the truth of incarnation, *i.e.* of the possibility of depicting the divine in human form. There is, of course, nothing distinctly original in this argument, for it was used by Theodore of Studion during the iconoclastic controversies.

Trubetskoy likewise stressed that second cardinal doctrine of the Russian progressive school, namely, the moral freedom of the individual, which is his greatest potentiality, but likewise the cause of sin. "Divine love does not desire an automaton in man, but a friend. Therein is the justification of freedom: without freedom there is no friendship, and without friendship no love." [17] Eternal opposition to God's purpose results in eternal death. Many passages seem to indicate that this concept contemplates annihilation. "All power of evil is only in time and for a time." "In eternity evil will cease to be real." [18] Involuntarily one is reminded of the great mystic of the Middle Ages, Meister Eckhart, to whom also evil was only privation, and possessed no real positive character. But Trubetskoy was too indefinite in his statements to warrant a categorical

[16] Berlin, 1922. (In Russian.)
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

definition. He likewise rejected all ideas of salvation by someone else's merit, and made that a moral concept: a free, voluntary acceptance of the divine and union with it, resultant in a theanthropic personality. But he decidedly spoiled this idea by identifying the union with the partaking of the Eucharist,[19] which, of course, is to be understood as a case of capitulation to the official theology. Such instances, by the way, are by no means rare.

But his fundamental position, defended against the protagonists of the school of alogical mysticism, is his affirmation of a logical apperception of the eternal verities against the assertion that these truths cannot be known but are only intuitively, mystically, mediated.

The school of alogical mysticism comprises many of the present-day Russian religious thinkers, such as P. A. Florensky, N. A. Berdyaev, and S. N. Bulgakov, to name only the most important. But no attempt can be made to present their teaching in detail.[20] In general, they all oppose rationalism on the ground that it leads to self-assertion and self-affirmation, which is the very essence of separation from God.[21] The mysteries of religion are by their own concept contradictory to reason. The chief spokesman for the party is P. A. Florensky, to whom the very attempt to work out a reasonable religious theory is "the element of diabolic pride, a desire not to receive God into oneself, but to pass oneself for God—a presumption and self-will." [22] Reason has no part in the act of faith; it may only sub-

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[20] Cf. Nicholas Lossky: "The Successors of Vladimir Solovyef," in *The Slavonic Review*, June, 1924.

[21] Cf. N. A. Berdyaev: *The Meaning of History*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 153ff. (In Russian.)

[22] P. A. Florensky: *The Pillar and Affirmation of Truth*, Moscow, 1914, p. 65. (In Russian.)

mit itself in dutiful silence. Truth cannot be known; it must be accepted. Florensky expresses this thought in his frank avowal:

I do not even know whether Truth exists or not. But I feel with all my heart that I cannot live without it. And I know that if it exists, it is my all: my reason, my good, my strength, my life, and my happiness. It is possible that it does not exist; but I love it more than anything else which does exist. I relate myself to it as if it were existent, and love it—even though it perhaps does not exist—with all my soul and all my intellect. For its sake I reject all else, even my questionings and my doubts." [23]

Thus there is no bridge between reason and faith. God saves men, but they do not even know how, and cannot know it. This mystical rhetoric really spells the utter despair of reason, and brings the entire progressive movement dangerously near to bankruptcy, for it is akin to a capitulation to the official system. But the saving difference is that of principle: the official system requires acquiescence in the dictates of external authority, while this mystical approach fundamentally rests upon an individual experience of God.

As has already been mentioned, the introduction of the Western culture and spirit produced, aside from the Slavophils and their successors, another group, which believed that Russia's only hope of development and greatness lay in the acceptance of Western culture, and wished to transform Russia into a thoroughly Europeanized country. The line of the Westerners, as far as religious thought was concerned, was headed by Peter J. Chaadaev (1794-1856); he was not a profes-

[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

sional theologian, but a retired army officer. He published, in 1836, a *Philosophical Letter,* in which he rejected in a rather indiscriminate and undifferentiating manner all things Russian, and enthusiastically accepted and extolled all things European. With him, the rejection of official Russian Orthodoxy begins, but in its place he would have Russia accept Roman Catholicism, which he mistook for the efficient cause of European—particularly French—culture. In a sense, therefore, the Westerners were cultural exponents of the policy of Peter the Great, while to the Slavophils the ruthless tsar was anathema, and they idealized the pre-Petrine Russia. The lead of Chaadaev, as far as the trend toward Westernism was concerned, was followed by a very large number of educated Russians. Many of the outstanding writers like Belinsky, Turgenev, and Herzen, as well as others, were Westerners, and their influence was enormous. The party largely followed the philosophical leadership of Hegel, later of the Hegelian left, thus differentiating itself from the Slavophils, who were predominantly followers of Schelling. Religiously, most of them scornfully rejected the official theological system as hopelessly mythological and irrational, but rested satisfied with their philosophical negations; hence, contrary to the Slavophils, the Westerners were religiously sterile, or followed Comtian positivism and fetishism, or Feuerbach's anthropism. Their morality was utilitarian, in opposition to the ascetic other-worldliness of Byzantinism. Politically, they were ardent liberals and determined opponents of the tsarist absolutism, even thus manifesting a sharp contrast with the conservative and chauvinistic Slavophils. Thus, on the whole, the Westerners became hopelessly alienated

from the church, regarding Russian Christendom as a compound of mystagogy, magic, superstition, and a powerful obscurantist force which fanatically resisted all progress, enlightenment, and the highest good of humanity.

A few characterizations of the leaders of this group will suffice. Thus, for instance, V. G. Belinsky (1811-1848), the brilliant literary critic and the acknowledged leader of the progressive group of the first half of the nineteenth century, passed from Schelling, through Hegel, to Feuerbach, and to positivism, materialism, and atheism; politically he was a believer in democracy and socialism. During his Hegelian period, he was inclined to tolerate the oppressive realities of the Russian autocracy, because of the dictum that whatever is real is *ipso facto* rational. But later, Feuerbach and Strauss supplanted Hegel, with the result that the earthly god of Russia, the tsar, suffered the same fate in the estimation of Belinsky as the heavenly monarch. When his old friend, Gogol, the famous author of *Dead Souls,* was converted to the tenets of the Orthodox church, and in his *Selected Passages from Letters to Friends* [24] enthusiastically espoused the official cause of the church, Belinsky unhesitatingly broke all connections with him and wrote against him an open letter which became the acknowledged program of the progressive party. It was for the crime of having read this letter of Belinsky's in a meeting of kindred spirits that Dostoevsky and others were sentenced to death, but later this horrible verdict was commuted to a term in a Siberian prison and exile. What Russia needs, cried Belinsky, is law and order, justice and enlightenment,

[24] *Complete Collection of the Works* of N. V. Gogol, Berlin, 1921, Vol. IX. (In Russian.)

rational education, and no mystical Orthodoxy with its passive submission to the existing wrongs. The struggle was directed against the superstition and obscurantism of the Russian church. But that did not mean that Belinsky was irreligious. As T. G. Masaryk so well expressed it, the opposition of Belinsky, just as of Voltaire, was directed against the ecclesiasticized, clericalized religiosity of the church, and not against religion as such. "We have not yet solved the problem of the existence of God, and you want to eat!" Belinsky once vehemently rebuked Turgenev, who grew tired of a discussion about the topic.[25]

Alexander I. Herzen (1812-1870), who had emigrated from Russia and from 1847 to his death lived in Europe, mostly in England, left his native land in order to gain freedom of expression for his radical liberalism. He was one of the most important figures in the entire literary history of Russia, as well as the leader of the progressive youth of "the sixties," and his *Kolokol* (*The Bell*), published in London and regularly smuggled into Russia in thousands of copies, led the progressive liberalism of the younger set; even Tsar Alexander read it regularly, "to keep himself informed." To Herzen, the old political régime of absolutism rested upon theological prepossessions and ideology; hence the first step in the direction of overthrowing the theocratic absolutism consisted in gaining freedom from the thraldom of theological doctrinairism. The church and the state stand or fall together. The genuine revolution, therefore, must be socialistic and atheist-materialistic. He, however, differed from such men as Bakunin in holding that a revolution, *i.e.* a transformation of an absolutistic state into a truly demo-

[25] Masaryk: *The Spirit of Russia,* Vol. I, p. 449.

cratic one, could not be accomplished by a *coup d'état.* It could only be brought about by education; not by an external compulsion and force, but by an inner, spiritual liberation and development. Hence he was against nihilistic terrorism.

Although quite different from the two preceding representatives of Westernism, and hardly a Westernist himself, yet by his rejection of the official Christian systems, Count Lev N. Tolstoy may properly be mentioned in this connection. As he himself told us in his *Confession,*[26] he, like the great majority of men of his class, had early "discarded all belief in anything that he was taught" religiously. He had lived the life of a typical representative of the Russian intelligentsia until at the age of fifty he passed through a religious crisis. At first he sought to force himself to believe indiscriminately everything that the church taught him, hoping that in some mysterious fashion he might find the meaning of the riddle of existence. But after several years of such conscientious spiritual drudgery he became convinced of the uselessness of his experiment, and rejected all Christian systems, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant alike, adopting for his religious creed "the five laws of Jesus": be not angry; do not commit adultery; take no oaths; resist not evil; and do not make war.[27] From that time on he often denounced in the most scathing terms the historic Christian communions, especially the Russian Orthodox, and was in turn excommunicated by that church in 1901. But in spite of the seemingly ruthless rationalism of Tolstoy, his attitude toward what he regarded as the real gospel of Jesus was quite uncritical and dog-

[26] Count Lev N. Tolstoy: *My Confession,* New York, 1887.
[27] *Idem., My Religion,* New York, 1885, p. 242.

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matic. Tolstoy, contrary to common Western opinion, is not to be regarded as a leading Russian religious thinker, and it is improbable that his compatriots will be extensively influenced by his religious radicalism. His following forms a small sectarian body at the present time, and is not likely to grow.

The Westernist progressive party, under radical influences emanating from countries like Germany and France, differentiated itself into the nihilist, and later into the terrorist, organizations. This radical wing was frankly atheistic, socialistic, communistic, or anarchistic, having passed largely under the influence of the Western socialism of Marx and Engels. Michael A. Bakunin (1814-1876) was the father of Russian anarchism. Bakunin was neither a thinker nor a great leader; his contribution to the revolutionary ideology is to be understood in terms of a human being so exasperated by the stupid and unjust social organization that he, the victim of the system, in an unreasoning rage, resolves to destroy and annihilate it. His entire life was an expression of this crude impulse. It would be difficult to understand the comparative success of Bakunin's gospel of pan-destruction, were it not for the circumstance that so many ardent young spirits, burning with moral indignation at the sight of the oppression and appalling injustice which they observed about them, and of which they, too, were victims, were directly provoked into a similar mood of impotent rage, and into this same desire utterly to destroy the iniquitous thing.

As far as the official theology of the church was concerned, Bakunin, like other men of his kind, regarded it as superstition. To him, atheism was a liberalizing force, freeing man from all external authority. The

church was likened by him to "a heavenly dramshop" where men were drugged to forget their temporal miseries. One is involuntarily reminded of the analogous Marxian dictum that "religion is the opium of the people," so effectively inscribed by the Soviet authorities on the building opposite the famous shrine of the Iverian Virgin in Moscow. Religion, to Bakunin, was a temporary theological stage of human development, just about to be supplanted by the last and highest stage, positivistic science. The goal of all history and development is the absolute equality of humankind, where no external compulsory authority would constrain the individual will: this would be the period of anarchy—absence of rule. Therefore Bakunin recognized no authority; for with the fall of divine sanctions every other basis of authority had disappeared.

This Russian gospel of pan-destruction took on the peculiar form of nihilism, so well depicted in the person of Bazarov in Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons.* Bazarov insisted that he believed in nothing but "frogs," as he capriciously expressed it, meaning thereby his belief in natural sciences, and that only by exact scientific knowledge, to be obtained from the study of nature—for instance, dissecting frogs—could Russia be saved. This faith was shared by all nihilistic rejecters of "faith," as that concept was identified with the superstitious credulity demanded by the official ecclesiastical dogmatism; but in so far as they themselves were Russians, too, they believed with equally ardent and uncritical enthusiasm in their atheistic materialism and in their dogmatic panaceas for the perfecting of society. The leading figures among them were Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, and Pisarev.

Nicholas G. Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) was an

influential publicist who popularized the conclusions of positivistic materialism. He was chiefly a disciple of Feuerbach, whose writings he knew almost by heart. His influence upon the younger intelligentsia of the sixties was so marked that the nihilists, as the group was called, largely reproduced his point of view.

Chernyshevsky's enormous influence was exercised through a magazine which he edited; but the government considered his very fecund literary activity so dangerous that he was arrested in 1862 and sentenced to hard labor in the Siberian mines for the term of fourteen years. While he was in a Petersburg prison, he wrote his very widely read novel *What is to be done?* (1863), which became the working program of the younger radical generation. Chernyshevsky advanced in this work to uncompromising communism: the hero of the novel, Rakhmetov, did not flinch before the conclusion: "My shirt—your shirt; my pipe —your pipe; my wife—your wife." Masaryk characterizes the book as "the gospel of nihilism." [28]

Another ardent apostle of nihilism, Dobrolyubov, was originally educated for the priesthood, but became a disciple and friend of Chernyshevsky, and as such a determined opponent of "the kingdom of darkness." He was a colaborer with his teacher in the latter's literary review, and became a redoubtable literary critic. Pisarev also was a critic, and as such continued the work of Dobrolyubov, who died young. He, too, doggedly fought against theocracy, tsarism, and the church, drawing his inspiration not only from Feuerbach, but even from later materialistic scientists like Vogt and Moleschott.

Under these conditions, the various Western influ-

[28] *Loc. cit.*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 64.

ences conspired to make of educated Russians most determined opponents of the existing tyrannous régime as well as of the prevailing social conditions. The natural sciences, especially Darwinism, the philosophy of Comte and Feuerbach, the historical views of Buckley as well as the socialistic literature, all became known and largely accepted by Russia. Almost every member of the intelligentsia of the sixties was a democrat or a socialist, a Darwinian in science, a materialistic atheist, a positivist, a believer in woman suffrage, and a convinced opponent of the *status quo*. The whole tone of the educated society was negative, revolutionary, and it could not be otherwise, because of the oppression with which the state persecuted every suggestion of the liberals in the political, the economic, or the religious fields. Literature of the period is full of this spirit, in spite of the strict censorship. The foci of this seething discontent were the universities and schools of higher education, and the revolutionary spirit was shared by both men and women. Indeed, it is remarkable what a large rôle women played in the struggle. They were found among the active terrorists, and their numbers reached one fifth of the whole number.

From theory, so cruelly persecuted, the nihilist movement passed over to practice. Since no legitimate public opposition through literary channels was possible, for the organs like Chernyshevsky's *Contemporary* and *The Russian Word* were suspended by the government, and their editors imprisoned, the ardent liberals, hopeless of any other means of amelioration, and with their souls in revolt at the sight of the injustice and tyranny to which they and all Russia were subjected, resorted to secret plottings of violent measures. They began publishing in a secret printing-office

a periodical entitled *The Great Russia,* which furthered the idea of appealing to the tsar to call a constituent assembly and grant a constitution. Aside from this demand for the transformation of Russia into a constitutional monarchy, there also appeared many more radically tempered appeals demanding organization of Russia upon socialistic bases.

Early in 1862, a radical proclamation known as *The Young Russia* pronounced a bloody uprising against the existing régime, and its final overthrow, as the only possible means of liberating Russia from the thraldom of the tsarist autocracy. With their youthful confidence "in ourselves, in our own strength, in the favor of the people, and in an honorable future of Russia which is destined by fate to be the first to realize the socialistic program," they proposed to appeal to the tsar for coöperation, which, however, they confidently expected to be refused. Thereupon they proposed to issue the summons:

> Snatch your axes . . . and then . . . hack the tsarist party without mercy as it now knows no mercy toward us, hack it in the city-squares, if its degraded hirelings should dare to show themselves there, hack it in the houses, hack it in the narrow city alleys, hack it in the wide streets of the large cities, hack it in the villages and in the solitary dwellings.
>
> And do not forget to shout with each new victory, with each new struggle: Long live the socialistic and democratic republic of Russia! [29]

Shortly after the publication of this manifesto, St. Petersburg and other cities were terrified by a large number of fires started by incendiaries, and it was com-

[29] Masaryk: *op. cit.,* Vol. II, Part I, p. 147.

monly supposed that these criminal acts were but a part of the revolutionary program. The government now became aroused and took stringent measures for the suppression of the whole widely ramified revolutionary movement.

The movement, thus driven underground, organized itself (in 1862) into the first secret revolutionary society, *The Land and Liberty,* taking its name from a publication bearing that title. But this one, as well as practically all other similar secret societies, was broken up by the secret police in 1863, so that it could then be reported by the police that the whole revolutionary movement had been suppressed. But this was a mistake. The secret activity and propagation of radical opinions continued and soon bore fruit: in 1866 a student-nobleman, Karakozov, attempted to assassinate Tsar Alexander II by firing a pistol at him. Court investigation established the fact of his membership in a secret society called *Hell,* consisting predominantly of nonregular students of the Petersburg and the Moscow universities. This discovery and implication of many students in the affair led to the flight of large numbers of them from Russia, and thus made of these émigrés confirmed and professional revolutionaries.

The terrorist activity of the revolutionary organizations of the Left cost the movement the sympathy and support of the more moderate liberal groups which aimed at constitutionalism rather than socialism, and this in turn helped the government in its attempts to suppress the whole movement. From 1866, the government adopted a reactionary, consciously anti-liberal policy, especially manifested in the naming of Count Dmitri Tolstoy, as minister of public education. Count Tolstoy was a known reactionary, who directed his

attention to the "purification" of the fountains of education, the schools and universities. His reform consisted of stopping "the movements and sophisms which brazenly defy everything which has been sacred to Russia for ages, the religious faith, the foundations of family life, the right of property, the obedience to law and honor of the superior authority," as it was phrased in the rescript of the tsar to the president of the ministerial committee.[30] The so-called "classicism" was introduced into secondary schools, whereby the ancient languages and in general studies as far as possible removed from actual present-day life and thinking were introduced, in order to protect the students from contracting modern liberalism. This program lasted from 1871-93. Moreover, the number of the university students was arbitrarily reduced to about five percent of those of the *gymnasia,* by graduating only that percentage from the secondary schools. Besides, the Zemstva were deprived of their control of elementary local schools, which was assumed by the Ministry of Education; the latter was then free to dismiss all teachers who were "politically unreliable."

This period of reactionary policies on the part of the government called forth, as a matter of course, a renewed and desperately determined opposition from the radical groups. The exiled leaders, like Herzen in London and Bakunin in Geneva, published and smuggled into Russia tons of periodical and other revolutionary literature. The student youth was again organized into secret societies, as was revealed in the murder of one of the members, Ivanov, who was suspected of wavering loyalty to a revolutionary group and sentenced by it to death.

[30] June 4, 1866.

This conspiracy led in turn to a sharpening of the laws against political agitation, and a considerable extension of the powers of the police in such cases. The police had the right to arrest individuals suspected of political revolutionary activity; mere attendance upon a political street manifestation was punishable by exile to Siberia.

In 1869 a student, Nicholas Chaikovsky, founded a student club which studied socialism. Similar societies were founded with various other objectives, such as circles for self-education, for reading, etc.; they also represented many different types of opinion. These organizations were greatly strengthened when, in 1873, the government withdrew its permission to study at foreign universities and recalled those students who at the time were studying abroad. The returned students were very generally imbued with the ideas of Bakunin and Lavrov, who came in personal touch with them in Zurich, where they were editing a periodical. The revolutionary agitation, which hitherto had affected primarily the educated classes, especially students, now entered upon a new phase of development. The leaders determined to carry the propaganda directly to the masses of the Russian people, and to imbue them with the revolutionary spirit in preparation for an uprising against the existing government. Prince Peter Kropotkin, the greatest of the theoretical anarchists of Russia, disguised himself as a workingman, and held secret meetings with the Petersburg working masses, at which he strove to awaken in them class-consciousness by informing them about the Western socialistic movements. This program of "going among the people" was enthusiastically accepted by a large number of idealistic young people of both sexes, mostly stu-

dents, who abandoned their intended careers and went into the country districts as country teachers, midwives, physicians, tradesmen, artisans, or even hired themselves out as ordinary agricultural laborers, in order to gain access to the peasants and to imbue them with their socialistic ideals and distribute revolutionary literature among them. Some of this work was done under clever disguise, as, for instance, when some socialistic pamphlets were published as sermons of the bishop of Voronezh. The number of agitators among the people was estimated in 1875 at more than two thousand. The reason they were able to undertake this work at all was that they enjoyed the sympathy of the local Zemstva and even of some governmental officials, who shielded them and even protected them against arrest. One such justice of the peace, for instance, contributed forty thousand rubles to cover the expenses of the propaganda.

But, on the whole, the program of these idealists, who had the characteristically exaggerated Slavophil notions regarding the "unspoiled soul" of the muzhiks, was bound to result in a dismal failure. The peasant was not ready for a socialistic revolution; in his crass ignorance and superstition, and his stolid fatalistic indifference and resignation to his sufferings, he was incapable of being molded into consciously revolutionary material. Moreover, the peasants generally believed that the tsar, their *batushka,* was good, and that all the misery to which they were subjected was the work of the landlords and the officials. In 1876, two agitators hit upon the plan of utilizing this confidence of the peasants in the tsar by passing themselves off as his representatives. They showed the muzhiks a document, the *Golden Manifesto,* which they said

bore the tsar's signature, and which urged the peasants to organize themselves into secret societies to prepare for the expropriation of the landlords, on the ground that the tsar had given all land to the peasants. In this faith the peasants followed the directions of the agitators, and built up a considerable organization. But the plot was discovered by the police and frustrated. Consequent investigation revealed, however, that the peasantry continued to believe that it was the tsar's purpose to give them all the land, but that he was continually being thwarted by the landlords and the officials. Therefore, to loot a landlord or oppose an official was not wrong in the peasants' code of ethics.

It became quite evident, therefore, that a revolution emanating from the peasant masses or supported by them was unthinkable. In most instances they betrayed stolidity or a complete absence of comprehension of the revolutionary objectives; in other instances they manifested lack of confidence in the leaders and even readiness to betray them to the authorities. Moreover, since the movement lacked organization, the government found it possible gradually to gain control of the situation, and to arrest and imprison the ardent apostles of revolt. The strengthening of the laws against the illegal societies resulted in still heavier persecution of the social revolutionaries; and yet, in 1876, the remnants of the former groups combined to form a new society, which resumed the name of the first revolutionary organization, *The Land and Liberty*. The soul of this new group was Alexander Mikhailov, an excellent organizer and leader, so that his society was the strongest and most important focus of the revolutionary activity. The outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War (1877) also helped to consolidate the opposition

forces, as the incapacity and corruption of the governing class were then plainly manifested, and the energies of the government were directed to the prosecution of the war. And yet the authorities did not relax their vigilance; during this period, the great trials of the revolutionary suspects were staged, when about four thousand were arrested and some of them were sentenced to long prison terms. Out of this number, two trials—of the fifty, and of the one-hundred and ninety-three—aroused an enormous amount of public sentiment, because the accused in their speeches fearlessly indicted the government, and their sentiments readily found an echo among the liberals everywhere. The government did not dare to suppress these pronouncements, for the humiliating terms imposed upon Russia by the Congress of Berlin aroused against it general indignation, shared even by the loyal, conservative Slavophils.

In 1878 Vera Zasulich shot and wounded the Petersburg head of police, General Trepov, because he had illegally ordered the infliction of corporal punishment upon a student, a total stranger to her. Count Pahlen, then the minister of justice, demanded that she be tried by jury, for he began to resent the capriciousness of the police in reference to his department. To the amazement of the public, Zasulich was acquitted, although the jury consisted mostly of state officials. This incident was an eloquent commentary on the state of public opinion at the time when even moderate liberals were willing to coöperate with the nihilists.

During the year, a whole series of attacks upon the lives of highly placed officials, and even upon the tsar himself, finally produced a differentiation within *The Land and Liberty* society itself. In 1879 the organiza-

tion suffered a division into two groups, of which the one committed to the program of terror received the name *The People's Will*, and the more moderate one, which made politico-socialistic propaganda among the peasants and the workers its program, came to be known as *The Black Redistribution* (meaning the reallotment of the black soil).

The terrorists proclaimed as their objective a social uprising for the purpose of gaining political freedom and the establishment of a socialist state. The means toward the attainment of this goal included political murder, regarded as judicial execution, and appropriation of public money, viewed in the light of confiscation. The leaders hoped that murdering some dozens of the highest officials would bring about the desired uprising. Their attention was especially centered upon the murder of the tsar. In 1879 an attempt was made to entrap him when he was returning from Crimea, by mining the railroad track in three places; but the tsar fortunately escaped, for his train followed the baggage train, which was overtaken by the disaster prepared for the tsar's entourage. Next spring the dining-room of the Winter Palace was blown up at dinner time, but again the tsar escaped death due to having been detained by a visit of Alexander of Bulgaria.

The tsar now changed his policy radically: he called to the position of minister of the interior a man known for his liberal opinions, Count Loris-Melikov, and granted him almost unlimited powers, which made him practically a dictator. The new minister introduced some really ameliorating features into the government's dealing with the question of the revolutionaries, abolishing the infamous Third Department (*i.e.* the secret police), freeing some six thousand political suspects,

giving greater liberty of action to the Zemstva, composed mostly of liberal landowners and nobles, and obtaining the recall of Count D. Tolstoy from the position of minister of national education. The liberal circles of the moderate constitutional stamp felt really encouraged to hope for the long-desired reforms, which Loris-Melikov was not backward in promising them. But the radical revolutionists would not believe in what they regarded as a feint for the purpose of beguiling the unwary. The concessions came too late. The revolutionaries even made an attempt upon the life of the dictator. That same year, three different methods of carrying out the tsar's assassination were adopted. When a call for volunteers to throw the bomb was issued, forty-seven St. Petersburg workingmen were ready to undertake the perilous task. Out of these, six persons were selected. Finally, on March 13, 1881, when the tsar was returning from a review of troops, a bomb was thrown under his carriage; it shattered the carriage and wounded some members of the entourage, but the tsar escaped. When he stepped forward to ask the assailant who he was, another assailant threw his bomb directly under the tsar's feet, and this time the tsar was mortally wounded, and the assailant, Grinevitsky, killed. An hour later, the tsar died in the Winter Palace.

Four days before his death, Alexander II, "the tsar-liberator," approved the so-called "Constitution" of Count Loris-Melikov; three hours before his death, he ordered this "Constitution" to be published in the governmental bulletin. This document really contemplated calling together only a representative consultative body, aside from organization of commissions for various reforms. The suggestions and projects of the

general commission were to come for approval or rejection of the government. That, of course, was no constitution in the proper sense of the word; yet it represented certain concessions on the part of the tsar.

Alexander III (1881-1894), educated by Pobedonostsev in the spirit of the strictest Slavophil conservatism, at first ordered that nothing be changed in the ordinances of his father, not even excepting Loris-Melikov's "Constitution." Soon, however, he changed his mind, and inaugurated a period of the strictest repression and absolutism. He avenged the death of Alexander II by inaugurating a period of a veritable "white terror."

In the first place, he terminated the vacillating policy of the previous reign between constitutionalism and absolutism: he definitely chose the latter, and acted consistently in accordance with that decision. Katkov went into ecstasies over this "return of an absolutistic tsar, who received his power from God, to whom alone he is responsible." [31] Moreover, the chief adviser of the tsar, Pobedonostsev, with a group of his friends, organized a secret anti-revolutionary society, *The Holy Fellowship,* which used the methods of the revolutionaries—including murder—to defeat its opponents.

On the tenth day after the death of Alexander II, the revolutionists issued a manifesto addressed to the new tsar, in which they offered him cessation of the struggle, should he call representatives of the people and grant a constitution. But the tsar's only answer was adoption of general and thoroughly reactionary measures in all departments of the governmental system. Election of justices of the peace was abolished, trial by jury was limited, the hitherto liberal-minded Zemstva

[31] Masaryk, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 188.

were now filled with aristocratic loyalists and put under the surveillance of the officials of the government; the municipal officers fared similarly.

The police absolutism was likewise strengthened and extended. A special regulation gave the police exceptional powers of control which actually suspended ordinary jurisdiction and introduced a period of what was practically martial law, resulting in many arbitrary acts of the utmost harshness and cruelty.

In accordance with the express order of the tsar, education was reduced to such limits as would render it innocuous. Pobedonostsev, the guiding spirit of this "reform," fathered the project of establishing (in 1884) parochial schools, where the teaching staff consisted of the parish priests, who, quite generally, possessed a very low standard of education. These schools were then to rival the secular schools, which were under the control of the local Zemstva, and which were regarded as exerting "a pernicious, liberalizing influence." As for the higher schools and universities, a new statute was issued for their control, whereby they were deprived of the small degree of academic freedom which they had enjoyed hitherto. The rectors and deans, previously elected, were now appointed by the government. Moreover, the state appointed inspectors, independent of the university authorities, who possessed very extensive disciplinary powers. Professors were appointed by the government, and their activity was spied upon and reported; the same was true of the life of the students, whose number was lowered, the stipend formerly granted to poor students being taken away, in order to prevent the proletariat elements from entering the governmental service and the learned professions. The curriculum was also thor-

oughly "expurgated": all scientific and especially philosophical and political studies were reduced to a minimum, if not altogether excluded. Thus, for instance, in philosophy only lectures on Plato and Aristotle were permitted. As could be expected, all professors and students of even moderate progressive tendencies were promptly dismissed. Schools for the education of women suffered the same restrictions and suppression, for Count Pahlen well knew what a considerable rôle women had played in the revolutionary struggle.

The active revolutionaries were hunted down with the greatest perseverance and determination, and most inhumanly and cruelly treated. Authentic descriptions of the horrors of the Siberian prison system filled Europe with a moral indignation such as only the Turkish atrocities evoked. Such was the régime of Alexander III, which lasted till 1894, the date of his death.

CHAPTER II

BETWEEN THE TWO REVOLUTIONS (1905-1917)

NICHOLAS II (1894-1918), destined to be the last of the Russian tsars, was educated under the direction of his father, Alexander III, and imbued with his views, although he was utterly devoid of his father's decisive qualities of character, being of a weak and yielding disposition; hence the actual direction of policy was often dictated by other minds. During the first part of his reign, Pobedonostsev, the ober-procuror of the Holy Synod, was the tsar's evil genius; after this powerful man's retirement, Nicholas fell increasingly under the influence of his well-meaning but hysterically constituted wife, Alexandra, daughter of the grand duke of Hesse Darmstadt. The emperor began by declaring his intention to "follow his father in everything." In reply to a loyal address, having been instigated to it by Pobedonostsev, he returned a haughty challenge to "those who indulged in senseless dreams with regard to the participation of the Zemstva in the direction of the internal affairs of the Empire," [1] informing them that they would find that "while he would devote his energy to the service of the people, he would also maintain the principle of autocracy as firmly as it had been maintained by his lamented father."

This tactless challenge angered and alienated still further the parties which were striving for constitu-

[1] Hugh Y. Reyburn: *The Story of the Russian Church,* London, 1924, p. 270.

tional reforms, and their resentment manifested itself in a letter which was sent to the tsar in January, 1895. The writers of this letter plainly indicated that they were ready to accept the challenge so haughtily flung at them.

Under the reign of von Plehve, who was appointed minister of the interior in 1902, the political and social atmosphere became stifling. He persecuted the Zemstva, imposed most rigorous restrictions upon students and schools, so that "a group of students were not allowed to walk down the street together," [2] and dominated all schools and universities by espionage; even private citizens were compelled to procure a written police permission to hold a party in their own homes. Von Plehve, a minister of the state, was directly implicated in the pogroms which earned for Russia such unenviable notoriety, and by official regulations aggravated the already inhuman treatment of the Jews. He directly promoted, in 1903, a pogrom in Kishinev, which was so revolting that the governor of the *gubernia,* Prince Urusov, resigned his post in protest. Finally, in 1904, the life of this reactionary, whose policy had aggravated the already tense situation, was terminated by a bomb thrown by a revolutionary. Russia, like Turkey, was ruled by "autocracy tempered by assassination."

To the dissatisfaction with the autocratic form of government was added a cause which most effectually spread misery and consequent disaffection among the peasants, namely, famine. Large areas of the country were affected by this catastrophe, which began in 1891 and subsequently came at intervals. The second came in 1898-99, and not only spread misery but ruined

[2] Bernard Pares: *A History of Russia,* New York, 1926, p. 408.

many a farmer's family for the future. During the fearful catastrophe the fields remained untilled, for even the seed was consumed and there was nothing to sow; horses and cows were either sold or killed for food; the number of sick was very large, those ill with scurvy amounting to one hundred thousand in the provinces of Samara, Kazan, and Simbirsk alone." [3] The proverbially patient, phlegmatic peasant millions became desperate, for they had nothing to lose by revolting against the conditions under which they were forced to live, and possibly something to gain by any kind of change.

The workers also became exceedingly restless, due to the steady progress of Socialism among them. The first Social Democratic Party—known as *The Party for the Emancipation of Labor*—was founded in 1883 by Gregory V. Plekhanov, "the father of Russian Marxism," outside of Russia. A similar organization was founded in St. Petersburg in 1885. In 1894 this party was suppressed, but continued its agitation underground. The beginning of the labor movement on a large scale may be seen in the large St. Petersburg textile workers' strike in 1896, which was participated in by thirty thousand workers. Even the Jewish workers organized themselves, in 1897, into the *Bund,* which attained a very far-reaching importance, because Jews were deprived of so many legal rights that this organization served as an outlet for their revolutionary inclinations.

Under these circumstances it would be futile to expect any abatement of the agitation for political liberty, or at least for amelioration of the existing condi-

[3] Olgin: *The Soul of the Russian Revolution,* New York, 1917, p. 43.

tions, and it could be foreseen that the extreme radical organizations had a better chance of success than the more moderate ones. Therefore the efforts of the earlier revolutionary and other political organizations continued with furious energy. The revolutionary tradition was inherited, by the beginning of the twentieth century, by the Social Revolutionary Party, which was composed of some five groups, and which added to the political demands the dicta of the Marxian teaching. But they not only aimed at the establishment of a socially juster organization and distribution of wealth, but included within their program a demand for political as well as industrial democracy. The chief exponent of the Socialistic creed in Russia was Gregory V. Plekhanov, who held strictly to the doctrines of Marx, according to which the capitalistic stage of social evolution is necessary for the development of conditions under which the majority of workers are turned into wage-earning proletarians, and in consequence become fully class-conscious. The war against capitalism could never be successfully waged unless such conditions prevail; for that reason, Plekhanov gave his attention to the industrial workers rather than to the peasants, as the previous revolutionary organizations had done. But Plekhanov did not regard the Russian situation as sufficiently ripe for the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, and adopted a program of amelioration of the existing living and working conditions, to be realized only in coöperation with the more social-minded political leaders of the middle and educated classes, as the only feasible mode of procedure until such a time as Russia should become sufficiently industrialized to develop a strong, class-conscious proletariat. In 1898, the scattered groups, including the

Jewish *Bund,* organized themselves into the Russian Social Democratic Workmen's Party. The German "Revisionist" movement, which came to look upon the state as a means for the removal of grievances of the industrial order rather than as one of the chief evils to be removed, found Russian exponents in Peter Struve, Sergei Bulgakov, and Prokopovich.

However, these tendencies, as was almost inevitable, produced a corresponding reaction in favor of the former orthodox revolutionary methods of dealing with the situation, and events conspired to further these more radical endeavors. The leaders of this tendency, like Lenin and Martov, came to advocate, in such writings as Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* and *Letter to a Comrade,* a centralized direction of or dictatorship over the rank and file of the party, whose activity would be limited to a prompt execution of the orders of the leading oligarchy, without sharing either in the direction or in the responsibility of the leaders. In other words, he rejected the trend toward democracy which manifested itself strongly in Socialism, and insisted that the victory of Socialism could not be won by such methods, but only by an efficiently centralized, militaristically organized and directed party action. At the Congress held in London, in 1903, the Russian Socialist Party divided over this issue into the Bolshevik (majority) and Menshevik (minority) factions, with a small majority in favor of the former. In 1905, the Bolshevik faction was able to capture the Central Council, from which it promptly excluded all the adherents of the democratic-minded minority. The issue between them was just this insistence upon the oligarchical rule by the leaders of the Bolsheviks, and the democratic orientation of the Mensheviks; in the struggle which

ensued, as later events proved, the victory was to rest with the Bolsheviks, who under the leadership of Lenin were to seize the reins of government from Kerensky in October, 1917, and to plant the red flag over the grim symbol of the tsarist autocracy, the Kremlin, thus signifying that the long struggle of the revolutionary parties with the ancient autocracy of the tsars was victoriously ended.

The story of the First Revolution—that of 1905—is sufficiently well known not to require any extended repetition here. The colossal defeats sustained by the Russian army during the Russo-Japanese War revealed —in spite of all the attempts to keep it secret—such a depth of governmental mismanagement and corruption that the loud cry for reforms became quite general, and terrified even the previously impervious statesmen. The tsar felt forced to make concessions to the popular demands for a constitutional form of government, and thus compelled by the sense of the stern necessity of such a quieting action, rather than from conviction, he finally granted the poor makeshift of a Constitution under which the first Imperial Duma was elected.

The liberalization of the religious policy, which this involved, was first promised in 1904. Late in that year, the Zemstva held secret conferences in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and under the leadership of Prince Sergei Trubetskoy of the Moscow University issued a *Petition of Rights,* which demanded, among other things, also freedom of conscience. The government tried to stem the tide by issuing an *ukaz,* on December 12, 1904, in which it pledged itself to a certain tentative program of amelioration of the hitherto prevailing policy of religious intolerance.

The piteously blundering policy of the government

which resulted in the horrible massacre of the "Bloody Sunday," when on January 22 the working masses marched peacefully, carrying icons and singing religious and patriotic songs, under the leadership of Priest George Gapon, to petition the tsar for a redress of their wrongs, embroiled the seething discontent still more. Finally, on April 17, 1905, the tsar gave the Russian religious bodies his "Easter gift" in the form of an *ukaz, Regarding the Increase of Toleration,* which established a certain degree of freedom of conscience not hitherto enjoyed, although this was neither full nor did it include all religious communions.

In spite of the fact that the *ukaz* had expressly stated that the Orthodox church should retain its privileged position as "the primary and governing in the Russian Empire," the galling disabilities which had afflicted the Old-Ritualists, the Roman Catholics, and the various communions of the sectarians were now swept away. The chapels of the Old-Ritualists were opened; the secret, disguised Roman Catholic monasteries, which existed in the Kingdom of Poland, were legitimatized; and transfer of membership from one to another religious communion was permitted.

On the other hand, the new law did not recognize non-confessionalism as legal, so that every citizen was supposed to belong to some one of the existing religious bodies; the marriage rite remained a monopoly of the church. The six millions of Jews living within the confines of Russia under notoriously harsh and oppressive conditions received no relief.

The Easter *ukaz* was further validated by the granting of the *Manifesto* of October 30, 1905, which granted Russia a limited monarchical form of government.

The liberalizing tendency found exponents even

within the church itself, and among these even men of high station, such as the metropolitan of St. Petersburg, Antony. A more radical movement was organized in St. Petersburg by "the thirty-two priests," who under the leadership of Priest Peter Kremlevsky became pioneers of the later church-revolutionary forces.[4] A member of the group, Eugene Kh. Belkov, edited an organ of the party, which, however, was suspended several times, until finally its editor was subjected to a trial.

The objectives aimed at by these liberal movements were, in short, an attempt to overthrow the bureaucratic caesaropapism of the Holy Governing Synod and to substitute for it some more democratic form of synodical, *i.e.* truly representative ecclesiastical government. The chief mover in the matter was Antony, metropolitan of St. Petersburg, who as early as December, 1904, appointed a committee of liberal professors of the Metropolitan Theological Academy to work out suggestions regarding the needed reforms in the government of the Orthodox church. Their memorandum stressed the necessity of freeing the church from the existing dependence upon the state, and making it autonomous within its own sphere. In order to work out the policy, it was demanded that a Russian local Sobor be convened.

As long as Pobedonostsev held the reins of the Holy Synod in his firm grasp, endeavors of this kind were frustrated by his opposition. But after the *October Manifesto,* the erstwhile omnipotent minister, in whom the incarnated autocratic principles could not tolerate the new régime, retired from office, and Prince A. D.

[4] Cf. Vvedensky: *The Church and the Government,* Moscow, 1923, p. 24. (In Russian.)

Obolensky was made his successor. The situation was now propitious for the representatives of the liberal tendency, and their demand for the calling of a Sobor was actually granted. The tsar summoned the synodical metropolitans and expressed his wish to have the Sobor called soon, exhorting them to hurry with the necessary preparatory labors. Their preparatory session was begun in January, 1906, and lasted till the end of the year.

However, the general situation soon changed. Four months had not passed since the granting of the *October Manifesto* when the tsar with his reactionary bureaucracy began to plot how the "liberties" granted so recently could be revoked, or at least limited. The church proved itself an able ally in this work of restoration of the old autocratic rule. In 1906, *The League of the Russian People,* popularly known as *The Black Hundred,* was organized; this notoriously reactionary body soon became inextricably bound with the church, and counted among its members a large proportion of the hierarchs as well as of the clergy and the laity. It became notoriously prominent in the brutally inhuman anti-Semitic riots, the pogroms, and in political murders; the government, secretly in collusion with the organization, not only did not punish its lawless activity, but on the contrary often actively supported the perpetrators in their nefarious projects.

The preparatory sessions of the Sobor committee were held under such conditions. No wonder that the liberal forces, in the minority from the beginning, soon lost their lead, which passed to the leaders of the conservative and monarchical hierarchs, such as Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow, and the able young bishop of Volhynia, Antony Khrapovitsky, who later became

the leader of the émigré clergy. These conservatives also wanted "freedom of the church," but in the sense of concentrating the power in the hands of the hierarchy, headed by a patriarch, who would, as formerly, represent the inner autonomy of the church as against the encroachments and overwhelming preponderance of the power of the state. In the struggle between the democratically representative policy of the liberal faction and the conservative demands for an oligarchical rule of the hierarchy, the latter quickly gained a preponderating majority.

The program worked out by this committee was correspondingly conservative: the emperor was accorded the right of sanction of all the more important decisions of the hierarchy, and among other matters he was to call the Sobor, if he thought necessary, and to approve the election of a patriarch. Hence, fundamentally the new scheme differed but little from the old autocracy of the Holy Synod, through which the will of the tsar was decisive in all matters upon which he wished to speak.

In the meantime, the first Duma was dissolved without any preliminary notice to its president, and the tsarist reaction against the forced concessions of the previous year further manifested itself in dissolving the pre-Sobor session even before it had fully completed its labors. As for the recommendations of the session that a national Sobor be called, these, as potentially disturbing to the old order, were quietly but resolutely ignored. Thus ended the first attempt to reform the Russian church; nothing was done in the matter until after the fall of the tsar in the spring of 1917.

The ruling hierarchy also took a pronouncedly hostile attitude toward the parties of the Left in the

Duma. The first Duma counted fourteen priests among its delegates, and among these priests Gregory S. Petrov, a fiery orator and an able publicist, was an outstanding liberal leader. The second Duma, elected after the most determined efforts of the government and the ultra-conservative parties to gain a comfortable majority for themselves, for which purpose the electoral law was most arbitrarily interpreted, was, naturally enough, more conservative. But, in spite of this, the priestly delegates were found mostly in the Center, and even on the Left, rather than predominantly on the Right, as was expected. Five of them even joined the Labor Party, which had the largest representation (201), and the Peasant Group. The Synod now openly adopted forcible measures to compel these deputies of the people, whose right to a free expression of their political views was guaranteed by the constitution, to change their political creed. The Holy Synod, after a few ineffectual attempts to win them freely, issued a categorical demand stipulating that they either join one of the parties of the Right (from the *Party of the 30th of October* to the Right), or renounce the priesthood. After the second Duma was dissolved, the priests-delegates of the Left who did not change their political *credo* were promptly arraigned before the ecclesiastical tribunal and deprived of their orders. Others who were not of the Left, but who did not show themselves sufficiently conservative were discriminated against and made to suffer from the displeasure of their superiors. As an example of this anti-liberal political animus of the Holy Synod may be cited the case of Bishop Antonin, at that time vicar of the Petersburg metropolitanate, and later one of the chief leaders of the reformist movement, who was

retired to a monastery because after the *Manifesto of October 30* he refused, when reading the liturgy, to employ the title "autocrat" in connection with the tsar's name.

After the dissolving of the second Duma, the electoral law was changed by the tsar, even though this change was contrary to the express stipulation of the Constitution; the new electoral law, which most drastically restricted the franchise in favor of the country gentry and other "reliable" elements, was worked out with the view of returning to the Duma an "obedient," *i.e.* monarchist, delegation. The church exerted itself to the utmost to recommend "suitable" candidates. The result of the terrorism instituted by the government was considerably gratifying to it: the Right had a clear majority, and among the delegates were some fifty priests and two bishops. The Left saw no priestly robes on its benches, which, moreover, presented a somewhat deserted aspect. During the period of the third Duma, the Holy Synod openly joined hands with the illiberal policy of the government of Stolypin in limiting all liberties granted by the Constitution. The hierarchy adopted repressive measures of its own: in the first place, it turned its attention to the regulation of the training schools for the priesthood, both the seminaries and academies. (It should be borne in mind that the seminary, roughly speaking, corresponds to our high school, and the academy to our theological seminary.) Both the seminaries and academies, during the revolutionary years of 1905-1906, showed themselves largely on the side of the liberal aspirations. Both professors and students made public commitments of their political liberalism. This the Holy Synod proposed to change.

In 1908, a committee for the revision of all theological training schools was appointed, and its personnel plainly indicated the direction of the contemplated revision: among its members were the chief leaders of the reactionary policy of the church—Bishop Antony of Volhynia, Dmitry of Kherson, and Metropolitan Arseny of Novgorod. Liberal professors were dismissed and new rules were imposed which were calculated to banish all liberalism from the schools.

Furthermore, the hierarchy, which chafed at the sight of the very restricted "liberties" granted to the non-Orthodox, exerted itself most powerfully to restrict, as much as possible, the enjoyment of this freedom. In December, 1907, the church leaders presented the Duma with their project of reconstructing the laws relative to the matter, but the Duma did not show itself ready to coöperate. When, in the fall of 1910, the Holy Synod, disregarding the legitimate channels, instituted new regulations for the theological academies, even the very conservative personnel of the third Duma was moved to oppose sharply the autocratic methods pursued by the hierarchy, and their protest took the tangible form of refusing to vote credits for the educational institutions under the control of the Synod.[5] The more liberal parties of the Duma went even further and broached the project of demanding the surrender of the control of such ecclesiastically controlled schools to the ministry of education.

But the most pronouncedly reactionary period of the pre-war era was that of the ober-procurorship of V. K.

[5] B. V. Titlinov: *The Church during the Revolution,* Petrograd, 1924, p. 28. (In Russian.)

Sabler, who took office in May, 1911. A man of intensely reactionary and intolerant tendencies, he gathered about him hierarchs of his own stamp, so that during his régime the liberal tendencies had no opportunity even to express themselves. Regarding the schools, even the very illiberal regulations of 1910 were not sufficiently stringent, and were superseded by the new *Changes in the Constitution of Theological Academies,* which placed the control of these institutions exclusively in the hands of their monastic superiors, who were charged with the duty of plucking out of them all liberal tendencies. Professors in these schools were again instructed not to belong to any political parties but those approved by the ecclesiastical authorities, or, in plain language, to the extreme monarchical groups. Furthermore, the parishes were now robbed of even the slight autonomic rights which they had preserved hitherto, and the fullness of power was given to the bishops. The clergy, under the pretense of economic security, were to receive their salaries exclusively from the state, so that they would no longer be dependent upon their parishes. The real intent of this last measure was obvious: to bind the clergy still more closely to the state by making them economically entirely dependent upon it, or, in other words, to fashion the clergy into an obedient and pliable spiritual tool. By making the priest a state official of the twentieth category, the process of the age-long caesaropapist policy was completed. Regarding the national Sobor, Sabler pledged himself to its calling, and early in 1912 actually appointed a new pre-Sobor commission which was to prepare the projects with which the Sobor was to deal. But Sabler

and his associates pursued a far different policy from that of the protagonists of the Sobor in 1906; for him, the Sobor was to free the hierarchy of the few remaining impediments in the way of a completely unimpeded oligarchical sway, and to set at the head of this centralized oligarchical government a patriarch, who would be the exponent and protagonist of such a policy.

The third Duma, as already indicated, slowly realized that with such a leadership in the church there could be no coöperation. Gradually it was drawn toward a policy of opposition to the various projects of the Holy Synod, until finally in 1912 it broke out into a determined and even violent denunciation of the ecclesiastical leadership. The action was known as "the attack on the church." The clerical members of the Duma felt compelled to publish a declaration in which they pronounced all the parties in the Duma, with the exception of the Right, the "enemies of the church."[6] However, the days of the third Duma were numbered, and under the shadow of the disagreement between the church and the third Duma the elections for the fourth Duma were carried forward.

The church took a zealous, indeed dominating, interest in these elections. A vast network of local centers under the control of the church—the local parishes—was drawn in an effort to manage the right kind of catch. The Synod, together with the minister of the interior, organized a special department for the purpose of directing the maneuvers, and the result of their feverish activity was truly astounding: the preliminary elections showed that the number of possible clerical delegates for the Duma was upward to

[6] Titlinov: *op. cit.*, p. 32.

one hundred and fifty,[7] so that even the government, which, as was well known, wished for an "obedient" Duma above all other things, was dismayed at the prospect of facing the rest of Europe with this "priests' Duma," as it was dubbed by a facetious newspaper reporter. Therefore confidential instructions were dispatched through the Holy Synod to the clerical delegates, the purpose of which was either to persuade or intimidate them into voting for some equally reliable lay candidate. In consequence, the fourth Duma mustered about the same number of clerical delegates as the third Duma had done. Nevertheless, the Right parties failed to obtain an absolute majority in the Duma, and consequently the struggle between this political organ and Sabler's policies regarding the church was of necessity continued. His new regulation for the clerico-educational institutions was rejected by the Duma; the same treatment awaited Sabler's project regarding the organization of the parishes, as well as his other projects. It was likewise generally understood that the long-promised Sobor was to be held on the occasion of the celebration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the reign of the Romanov house, and that the patriarchate would then be reëstablished. But the year of the celebration passed and nothing of the expected kind happened.

Probably the most potent factor in the extreme unpopularity of Sabler's administration, as well as in the distaste for religion on the part of the educated classes, is to be sought in the weird influence exercised over the imperial court, and especially over the tsarina, by the illiterate and immoral muzhik, Gregory E.

[7] Titlinov: *Orthodoxy in the Service of Autocracy,* Leningrad, 1924, p. 201. (In Russian.)

Rasputin. This designing, shrewd charlatan gained access to the court by reason of his fame as a "saint," which he had gained in the circle of a truly saintly monastic ascetic, Theophan, through whom the "elder" Rasputin also gained admission to the court circles. His personal worthlessness of character was exposed in a sensational book, entitled *The Holy Devil,* written by a monk, Iliodor, who knew him well from Theophan's circle. Both this monk and Bishop Hermogen, who also opposed Rasputin, were clapped into monastic prisons. This peasant Tartuffe soon possessed himself of a surprising ascendancy over the tsarina, and through her became the mightiest "power behind the throne." He began to play the rôle of a dictator, and most of the important ecclesiastical appointments were influenced, or directly effected, by him; some of them, indeed, were solely his own work. Beginning with Sabler, a whole line of ober-procurors was appointed at his bidding; the chief metropolitanates were filled by obscure hierarchs—as for instance, the cathedra of Moscow by the unknown Siberian bishop, Macarius—merely because they were Rasputin's protégés, and his word was all-powerful with the ruling circles. One of his creatures, Archbishop Varvara, even took it upon himself to canonize a new saint, and when he was disciplined by Ober-procuror Samarin for this arbitrary usurpation of ecclesiastical prerogatives, the emperor was persuaded to decide in favor of the archbishop, and even went to the length of dismissing Samarin.

In the meantime, the World War had broken out, and within a year the Russian forces began to suffer defeats, partly because the minister of war, Sukhomlinov, was criminally apathetic in the matter of car-

ing for the equipment of the army. Public opinion was again aroused, as it had been in 1905, by the scandalous inefficiency, unpreparedness, and general corruption of the military bureaucracy, and loudly demanded reforms. Rasputin's influence became paramount even in the policies of the state: many a minister, as for instance, Protopopov, the minister of the interior during the most critical period of the War, was appointed to his post because of the favor bestowed upon him by this evil genius of the Russian court. The dominance of this ignorant and immoral muzhik in the supreme authority became almost absolute when Tsar Nicholas took the ill-advised step of retiring the popular Grand Duke Nicholas from the post of commander-in-chief, and himself assumed the supreme command of the army. Thereupon the emperor removed to the army headquarters, while the tsarina became the real ruler of the country. Of a psychopathic religiosity, the empress was completely under the sway of Rasputin, so that the chief qualification of all who courted her favor was a word from the all-powerful religious humbug. Stürmer, the prime minister, was a mere puppet in Rasputin's hands. The latter held parties at which he received all kinds of supplications, which he then sent, if he approved of them, to the minister concerned with a scribbled order for their execution. He raised a colossal governmental loan, interfered with food supply and transport, issued military orders, and even forced the emperor to send a certain telegram to the Serbian king.[8]

Things had reached the pass when almost all the leading personalities in public life, with the exception of the very narrow circle of the tsarina's immediate

[8] B. Pares: *op. cit.*, p. 464.

supporters, were united in a rigorous condemnation of the ruinous and sinister influence wielded by Rasputin. Finally, one of the plots to assassinate him succeeded, when he was lured into the house of Prince Yusupov, husband of the emperor's niece, and there murdered by the host, with the assistance of V. M. Purishkevich, leader of the conservatives in the Duma; the deed was perpetrated in the presence of the grand duke Dmitry Pavlovich. The emperor left the front to attend Rasputin's funeral, and then for a number of weeks shut himself up in his own apartments, completely apathetic to the events which occurred in the meantime.

The church, during this period, was headed by men who contributed toward the discrediting of this institution, so that the progressive elements were more and more alienated from it. Sabler, who was Rasputin's creature, was among those who were sacrificed, in 1915, to appease the public wrath; he was succeeded by A. D. Samarin, who, however, was removed some three months later for having defied Rasputin. The office of ober-procuror was then filled by Volzhin, and finally by N. P. Raev, the last of the tsarist ober-procurors. The quality of the men at the head of the church may be gauged by the personality of the associate ober-procuror, Prince N. D. Zhevakhov, whose naïve and primitive credulity, passing almost all bounds of credence, has already been described. To him the tsar's prerogatives had a divine basis, for he was "the anointed of the Lord," and any opposition to his will was sinful. Such were the personalities in whose hands the supreme direction of the Russian church was placed during those fearful years of testing between 1914 and 1917! Is it any wonder that an organization so reactionary, so thoroughly subservient

to the tsarist absolutism, should come to be regarded in the same light with the governmental autocracy, and that all who desired the rightful and necessary modifications in the system of rule came to think of the church as the second chief obstacle in the path of progress?

CHAPTER III

THE MARCH REVOLUTION (1917)

THE disastrous defeats of the Russian armies at the Front were matched by an equally desperate internal situation. The reactionary forces were increasingly strengthened by new accessions of power. When in 1916 the reactionary Protopopov was appointed minister of the interior, his method of dealing with the extreme discontent of the nation, aroused by the disorganization and culpable inefficiency as well as corruption in the government, was that of equipping his police force with machine guns and of quartering Cossacks upon the cities, so that the slightest outward manifestation of discontent was drowned in blood.

The Duma, which met in November, 1916, reached in its protests the point of almost open denunciation of the government, but without much effect in the proper quarters. The very speeches of the delegates were so mutilated by censorship that often nothing but incoherent and unintelligible bits remained. Premier Stürmer, whose Germanophile policies provoked such a storm of protests throughout the country, was just then removed from office; but this was in no way a concession to the liberal demands, for he was succeeded by the state secretary Trepov, under whose administration conditions grew even worse than before. The stormy scenes in the Duma increased in number and violence, and the popular discontent

caused by shortage of food throughout Russia manifested itself in bloody uprisings. The demands of the Duma for a ministry responsible to itself became so loud and persistent that finally, on December 30, 1916, the Duma was prorogued. The agitation was so violent that the *ukaz* of prorogation was not even read to the end. By various maneuvers, the reassembling of the Duma was postponed, and when it was finally assembled in February, the masses were already in revolt and were joined by an increasing number of soldiers. The general situation in Russia now became so boldly anti-governmental that even the Duma refused to obey an order bidding it to postpone its meeting, and organized its own provisional executive committee, headed by its president, Rodzyanko. But the Social Democrats refused to coöperate, and organized, in the evening of that same day, the first Soviet, chosen from delegates hastily elected from the industrial plants and the military barracks. Thus Russia had to figure with two potential supreme organs of authority, and therein lay the tragedy of the situation as it developed later. The emperor continued apathetic to all appeals and entreaties, until it was too late. When he finally decided to return to the capital, he found the way blocked, and turned aside to Pskov, to the headquarters of General Ruzsky; there he learned that not only the Duma and the Soviet, but practically all the generals of the army as well, demanded his abdication. He finally consented to meet the representatives of the Duma's Provisional Government, and abdicated in favor of his brother, Grand Duke Michael. But when the Soviet refused to accept another Romanov, Michael prudently refused the throne till he should be called to it by a Constituent

Assembly. Neither he nor anyone else was ever called to the throne; Michael's decision proved to be the fall of the Romanov dynasty, which had ruled Russia for the past three hundred years. This momentous event was not the work of the Duma, or of the Bolsheviki, whose leaders, like Lenin and Trotsky, were not even in Russia at the time, and whose faction in the Soviet was still too weak to ascribe to it any dominant part. The dynasty fell of its own inherent weakness, because the system which it created and fostered alienated the nation and in the fearful hour of testing could not withstand the popular condemnation. The iniquitous tsarist régime had fallen because "its sins had found it out."

After the March revolution had found itself in possession of the field, it could be logically expected that the church would come in for its share as having been the chief prop of the former theocratic absolutism. But the revolution proved surprisingly tolerant toward the tsarist church; to be sure, such leaders as the oberprocuror, Raev, with his associate, Prince Zhevakhov, as well as the reactionary metropolitan of Petrograd, Piterim, were deprived of their posts. The last-named was tried by his own colleagues in the Holy Synod and sent into Caucasia; this undoubtedly was meant as a peace offering to the new régime on the part of the Synod. But it was unthinkable that the old members of the highest ecclesiastical office, who had been appointed with the protection of influences so diametrically opposed to the revolutionary régime now prevailing, would change overnight their rooted conviction and work in the spirit of the new order; therefore it was impossible that they should permanently retain their posts under the new régime. After a short attempt to work with the old body under the new revolu-

tionary ober-procuror, V. N. L'vov, who found it intractable, it was dissolved, and in April the new members were appointed. The personnel of the Synod was now composed of men more or less in sympathy with the needs of the day.

Thus no fundamental change in the structure of the government of the church was even attempted; the Provisional Government, true to its guiding principle, deliberately postponed the final solution of these weighty matters of making radical changes in the existing system till the meeting of the properly elected constituent bodies: in the church, the projected Sobor, and in the state, the Constituent Assembly. Even the office of ober-procuror was retained essentially unchanged till the end of June, when the Ministry of Confessions was substituted for it. The only legal difference between the tsarist ober-procurorship and the revolutionary one was that the incumbent was now appointed by the Provisional Government, while formerly this had been the prerogative of the tsar; but otherwise the duties and responsibilities of the office remained essentially unchanged. Of course, such minor and inextensive changes as the introduction of prayers for the new régime into the liturgical service, in place of those which had been recited for the imperial family, were made as a matter of course.

The new Holy Synod actually gained a greater degree of freedom than it had possessed formerly: its acts and decisions were now valid without requiring the approval of the government. Moreover, even though it was evident to all that the entire structure of the church must be rebuilt to suit the new conditions, and the projected Sobor was in the forefront of the thought of the church, yet no one could foresee how extensive

and momentous the changes were to be, and therefore even those few changes which the Provisional Government felt necessary to introduce found the church unprepared. Hence they became the source of recrimination, friction, and finally of a feeling of alienation between the two bodies. The church was not ready to realize that it could never again be what it was before the catastrophic days of the Revolution, and would not willingly surrender any of the unfair privileges or power derived from its unholy alliance with the tsarist autocracy. Struggle, therefore, was inevitable. For the time being, however, since all this was not clearly envisioned, the hierarchy acquiesced in the fact of the Revolution and outwardly adapted itself to the new order; thus, in spite of some protests, the new régime, on the whole, was accepted.

The majority of the parish clergy, however, greeted the overthrow of the tsarist system, generally speaking, with genuine enthusiasm. Their various local conventions adopted resolutions expressive of their strong sympathies with the new order. The Moscow Convention of Clergy and Laymen, numbering fifteen hundred delegates, adopted a resolution in which they have gone on record as saying: ". . . we profess our unswerving faithfulness and loyalty to the Provisional Government, not because of fear, but for conscience's sake."[1]

The former liberal parties within the church, suppressed during the reaction subsequent to the year 1906, were again revived; thus *The Group of the Thirty-Two* was reorganized, and besides, in March, 1917, a more radical liberal party appeared under the title *The All-Russian Society of the Democratic Ortho-*

[1] Titlinov: *The Church during the Revolution,* p. 57.

dox Clergy and Laymen, at the head of which stood the former member of the Duma and ex-priest, D. Y. Popov, as president, and Priest A. T. Vvedensky, as secretary. This organization professed a thoroughgoing opposition to the monarchic principle of government and strove for general democratization and socialization of the entire structure of Russian life: abolition of noble ranks; equal rights for women; absolute liberty of thought, word, and conscience; general state-supported grade and high-school education; struggle against capitalism; surrender of the land to the peasants and the factories to the workers; and a reform of the church.[2] But the new organization was not strong in numbers on account of its definitely socialistic character. Vvedensky, for instance, was actively engaged, on the public platform and through the press, in propagating a species of Christian socialism; it was this feature which caused the majority within the church to look askance upon the whole movement, for socialism was generally identified with irreligion. Petrograd became the center of the liberal movement, although this city was likewise the citadel of the conservative hierarchy, being the seat of the Holy Synod.

The Provisional Government was surprisingly slow in introducing changes into the religious sphere, even such changes as those to which the dominant political parties had long before committed themselves. Thus, for instance, the law granting full religious liberty was not published until July 17, 1917, when the Provisional Government had been in office some four months. By the provisions of this legislation, all civil limitations

[5] Cf. A. Vvedensky: *The Church and the Government,* Moscow, 1923, p. 32. (In Russian.)

based upon religious grounds were abolished, and the right to pass from one religious communion to another, as well as to sever one's connection with all, was granted. This last provision was of great importance, for hitherto non-confessionalism, or atheism, was not legally recognized. Nevertheless, the government allowed the ecclesiastical organs to retain some functions of a civil nature, such as the registration of births, the solemnization of marriages, and the granting of divorces, and all were compelled to resort to the church for a legal performance of such acts.[3]

Among the more progressive measures adopted by the government was the abolition of the office of oberprocuror, and the substitution for it of the Ministry of Confessions. This happened toward the end of June, when V. N. L'vov lost his office and was succeeded, in the new capacity, by the well-known historian, A. V. Kartashev. The project as originally worked out by the minister of the interior was of a much wider scope; in the beginning of July, he had projected a plan of mutual relation between the church and the state, which comprised the following provisions:

1. All state-recognized religious communions were to be, in their internal administration, entirely free.
2. Their administrative officials were subject to the oversight of the government only in so far as they performed acts of a civil or legal nature, such as the registry of births, the solemnization of marriages, the granting of divorces, etc.
3. The nature of the oversight was exclusively that of controlling the legality of such functions.
4. This oversight was to be exercised by the Ministry of Confessions.

[3] Cf. Titlinov: *op. cit.*, p. 79.

5. The government undertook the support of the churches and their officials and institutions. This support was to be granted to the church directly.[4]

The project, however, did not receive the approval of the legislative body of the government, and the only item which was realized was the organization of the Ministry of Confessions, which was passed early in August. The functions of the new ministry were defined as follows:

1. The Ministry of Confessions is constituted for dealing with all confessional matters.
2. The jurisdiction of this ministry comprises: (a) all matters relative to the Orthodox communion, temporarily in the same manner as they now belong, in accordance with the existing laws, within the competence of the ober-procuror of the Holy Synod; (b) of other Christian and non-Christian communions, which are subject, according to law, to the control of the department of non-Orthodox confessions of the Ministry of the Interior.
3. The posts of ober-procuror of the Holy Synod, and of his associate, are abolished.
4. The scope of the ministry is enlarged to include the minister of confessions, and two of his associates.
5. The minister of confessions, in the discharge of duties enumerated in article 2, unites in himself temporarily the entire jurisdiction of the ober-procuror and the respective jurisdiction of the minister of the interior, until the time of ratification, in a legal manner, of the reforms of ecclesiastical administration by the All-Russian Local Sobor, and a radical revision of the relations of the Russian government to the newly constituted confessions.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

6. To the ministry of confessions are transferred: (a) the office of ober-procuror of the Holy Synod with its juridical department, which is renamed the office of the Ministry of Confessions for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church, and the juridical department of the ober-procuror is renamed the juridical department of the Ministry of Confessions; (b) the department of Spiritual Affairs, renamed the Administration of the Ministry of Confessions for Affairs of the non-Orthodox and non-Christian Confessions.

7. For the support of the institutions named in article 5, until further changes, all grants hitherto made them, as well as other grants, are secured for that purpose, and are to be paid from the treasury as well as from special means.[5]

From this lengthy official document it is apparent that fundamentally nothing was changed in the old system of the ober-procural rule but the name, although professedly the arrangement was to be of only a temporary duration, until the church Sobor should work out a permanent system of supreme administration.

The church, in a fairly definite and clear manner, expressed its mind on the subject at the Convention of the Clergy and Laymen, held in Moscow, in June, 1917. This Convention was a very important one, for it served to forecast the character of the national Sobor which was shortly to be convened. It began with seven hundred delegates, but grew, as the sessions progressed, to twelve hundred members. On the whole, it was quite friendly to the government, which, considering that the delegates regarded themselves as representing the one hundred and fourteen

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

millions of Orthodox Russians, was an important circumstance. During the ten days of its activity, the Convention worked out and passed upon all the more important reforms which were deemed essential for the reorganized church of Russia, and also expressed its judgment upon the ecclesiastical measures either adopted or contemplated by the government. Among these the Convention was apprehensive of the drift toward positions which would estrange the government from the church, or ultimately bring about a separation of the church from the state. This was greatly feared by the ecclesiastical representatives. They demanded that their communion should retain the primacy among the religious bodies of Russia and also should continue to enjoy certain legal privileges which were not granted to the rest. This general demand was also formulated by the pre-Sobor committee, which was organized in June, and which published its pronouncement on July 13, 1917. Its provisions were as follows:

The Orthodox church should occupy in the Russian government the primary, most favored publico-juridical position among the communions, due her as the greatest national sanctuary, by reason of her exclusive historical and cultural value, as well as by her being the confession of the majority of the population. In accordance with the principle of liberty of conscience and of religious confession, granted by the new régime in Russia, the Orthodox church should wield such liberty in its utmost fullness. These fundamental principles comprise the following points:

1. The Orthodox church in Russia, as regards her constitution, legislation, administration, judiciary, doctrine and moral precepts, ritual, inner ecclesiastical discipline and outward relation with other confessions, is independent of the government. (Autonomy.)

2. The decisions, passed for her own direction by the Orthodox church in a manner specified by herself, are acknowledged by the government as legal norms, possessing, from the time of their publication by the ecclesiastical authorities, obligatory authority for all individuals and institutions belonging to the Orthodox Russian Church within as well as beyond the borders.

3. The acts of the officials of the Orthodox church are subject to the oversight of the government exclusively in the matter of their correspondence with the governmental laws; aside from this, these officials are responsible to the government only in accordance with the due process of law.

4. The government shall recognize the ecclesiastical hierarchy and ecclesiastical institutions ordained by ecclesiastical decisions. The government shall recognize the same validity of the administrative and judicial acts of such ecclesiastical institutions and proper church authorities as is ascribed to them by the ecclesiastical decrees, as long as such acts do not conflict with the governmental laws. The verdict as to the legality of the acts of church authorities shall be according to law.

5. The clergy, monks, and psalm-singers, who have completed their course of study in theological institutions or other professional schools, and likewise the psalm-singers of the *Edinovertsi* who have completed their special training, shall be free from the military, as well as other natural civil duties.

6. Whenever at least one of the parties to a marriage belongs to the Orthodox church, the marriage ceremony according to the Orthodox rite shall be acknowledged as the legal solemnization of marriage.

7. Ecclesiastically juridical pronouncements concerning divorce, or illegality or non-actuality of a marriage, shall be acknowledged as valid juridical decisions.

8. Registry of births by the church shall possess civil validity, provided it is kept in accordance with the governmental laws.

9. Liberty of profession and preaching of the Orthodox faith, and the right openly to conduct the divine services, shall be acknowledged and defended by the governmental authorities.

10. The twelve high holidays, Sundays, and the days especially observed by the Orthodox church, shall be acknowledged by the governmental authorities as the days of rest.

11. The head of the Russian government, as well as the minister of confessions, must be members of the Orthodox church.

12. On all state occasions when the government requires religious functions, the Orthodox church shall be given preference.

13. The Orthodox church shall be free to establish grade, middle, and high schools, not only the professionally theological, but all general educational institutions as well. The government shall grant these schools all rights of state institutions of learning.

14. In all secular governmental schools, as well as in private institutions attended by children of Orthodox parents, teaching of the catechism shall be compulsory. The support of the catechetical instructors in governmental schools shall be provided for from the state treasury.

15. All administrative offices of the Orthodox church possess the right of property of juridical persons. The existing administrative offices of the Orthodox church shall retain the property which they possess at the present time; moreover, they may not be abolished, and their property may not be confiscated, without the consent of the ecclesiastical authorities.

16. Church properties not yielding a net income shall be free from taxation.

17. The Orthodox church shall receive out of the state treasury annual appropriation to the limit of its actual needs, for which it shall be responsible in accordance with general principles.[6]

It is abundantly clear from this interesting document what kind of *modus vivendi* the church desired, and that such demands could not be granted even by the Provisional Government. When this government was superseded by the Soviet power, manifestly a collision was unavoidable and inevitable. The church was unwilling to surrender the unfair advantages it had formerly derived from its union with the state, and the new régime, professedly striving to eradicate the causes and consequences of the injustice to which the nations of Russia were subjected under the tsars, out of principle could not grant the full measure of the demands of the church.

The inevitableness of the collision of the two forces became apparent even during the last months of the Provisional Government, when on June 20 a law was passed whereby all schools supported from public funds passed into the control of the Ministry of Education; this affected primarily the parochial and other ecclesiastically controlled educational institutions. It must be remembered that the number of ecclesiastically controlled schools "amounted to thirty-seven thousand, *i.e.* one-third of all the schools in Russia."[7] Although they were supported by the government, they served the interests of the church, and under the new conditions it was unthinkable that such an anomalous con-

[6] Titlinov: *op. cit.*, pp. 80-82.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

dition could persist; therefore the law of June 20 was natural enough. It is, moreover, of special interest to notice that even the teaching staff of these schools demanded that action, and approved that all schools be unified under the common direction of the Ministry of Education. But the church at large felt this blow heavily and regarded the transfer of parochial schools to the control of the state as a calamity as well as an injustice. The Moscow Convention of Clergy and Laymen, which met in June, protested against it, and the formulation of the demands of the church, as published by the pre-Sobor committee in July, boldly demanded the restitution of these schools, and even the compulsory, state-supported, teaching of the catechism. The church clearly realized what it had at stake: the control of the parochial schools, and the compulsory teaching of the catechism of all Orthodox children, were of immense importance for the training of the younger generation in the official theological system. Their loss meant a gradual loss of the influence wielded so despotically by the church, and it likewise meant a corresponding gain of influence of the non-confessional—or as the church interpreted it, "godless"—secular education. But in spite of these vigorous protests, the governmental policy remained in force and the law of June 20 went into effect.

The Ministry of Education, moreover, planned to remove from the list of required subjects the teaching of the Orthodox Catechism—"the law of God," as it was officially termed—which was to be made optional. Formerly, it was a required subject of study in all schools, not only the grammar, but also the high, the technical, and the classical schools, as well as in the military academies and the army. It is not an over-

statement to say that the chief strength of the tsarist theocracy lay in this assiduous use of the schools for the widest dissemination of the religious—*i.e.* theocratic—sanctions of the tsarist power. The church fought against the threatened danger with might and main, and when its opposition remained ineffectual, for the government was justifying its stand by pointing out that to give one ecclesiastical organization an unfair advantage over the rest would amount to nullifying the provisions of liberty of conscience and freedom of religious profession, the church quite definitely began to regard the state in the light of its enemy. The hierarchy began to talk of opposing the "anti-christian" government, with its Ministry of Confessions, by a "strong" ecclesiastical authority, a strong and energetic patriarch. He was to be for the church what formerly the tsar was for the state: a representative of the might and will-to-power of the ecclesiastical monarchy. It was with this feeling widespread, and under the conviction of the increasingly unfriendly relations with the state, that the election of the delegates to the All-Russian Sobor (Council) was carried on, and in consequence of it the selection of the personnel was largely influenced thereby. The Sobor, as it turned out, was predominantly of a conservative character, with the reactionary faction strongly entrenched and wielding an overwhelming influence.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIAN LOCAL SOBOR OF 1917

THE Synodical proclamation of its intention to call the long-desired and long-deferred Sobor was published on April 29, 1917. In this document the reason for calling the Sobor was stated as that "the governmental overthrow which has taken place has radically changed our social and political life, securing even for the church the possibility and right of free organization. The secret dream of the Russian Orthodox people has become realizable, and the calling of the local Sobor in the nearest possible future now becomes necessary." [1] The proclamation was signed, among others, even by such conservative leaders as was Archbishop Agathangel, a known member of *The Black Hundred,* Bishop Andrei (who was by family Prince Ukhtomsky), and the former court chaplain, Lyubimov. The same day, the Synod decided to appoint a pre-Sobor committee, which was to prepare the necessary agenda for the Sobor. This committee, from time to time enlarged, had a goodly proportion of conservative leaders among its members, for nothing else could really be expected.

By a second proclamation of the Holy Synod, issued on July 5 of the same year, the Sobor itself was called for the 15th of August, to meet in "the God-fearing,

[1] Vvedensky: *The Church and the Government,* p. 59; cf. for the text of the entire document.

ancient city of Moscow," as the document styled it. Three days before the Sobor opened its sessions, the pre-Sobor commission published its reports, embodying a formidable mass of matters needing the attention of the Sobor, such as the legal status of the Orthodox church in relation to the state and a new form of the supreme church government; and it is interesting to note that this law-project contemplated the periodic calling of the national Sobor, which would be the supreme judiciary, having for administrative purposes two organs, the Holy Synod and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council.[2] Furthermore, the projects included reorganization of the constitution of the parish, of the schools, and a mass of other items too numerous to mention. The government, by its pronouncement of August 11, granted the Sobor the right to work out the new form of church government unhindered, but requested that the finished product be submitted to the Ministry of Confessions for approval; until such legal changes, adopted by the Sobor and approved by the government, were effected, the old church authorities and the old order of things were to remain undisturbed. Moreover, the Provisional Government willingly granted one million rubles for the expenses of the church assembly.

When the elections for the Sobor were completed, it was found that the number of the delegates amounted to five hundred and sixty-four, from which number ten were metropolitans, seventeen archbishops, fifty-two bishops, two protopresbyters, fifteen archimandrites, two hegumens, three hieromonks, four mitered archpriests, sixty-four archpriests, fifty-four priests, two archdeacons, eight deacons, twenty-six psalm-sing-

[2] See *Ibid.*, p. 68, where the whole document is printed in full.

ers, and two hundred and seventy-eight laymen.[3] It will be noticed that the above enumeration does not account for twenty-seven delegates; if these are to be counted with the clerical members, then the clerical party exceeded the lay representatives by eight persons. In that case, the relative strength of the clergy and laymen was almost equally distributed. Among the lay delegates was a large number of professors (41), of whom the two princes Trubetski were the most prominent; among other prominent lay members were men like Rodzyanko, the president of the Duma, General Artamonov, Count Apraksin, etc. The representatives were democratically elected and represented all the sixty-six dioceses of Russia: each diocese sent its bishop, two other members of the clergy, and three laymen. Aside from this, the four great theological academies contributed sixteen delegates, equally distributed among them; each university was represented by one delegate, and the monasteries of Russia had their spokesmen in a group of about ten delegates. The diocesan delegates had been elected by a diocesan council in a fairly democratic fashion.

At last, the memorable Sobor, the first after the two centuries of the oppressive reign of the Holy Synod, was opened. As the official report of the Sobor, *The Acts of the Holy Sobor of the Orthodox Russian Church,* describes it:

In the year one thousand nine hundred and seventeen since the birth of Christ, on August 15, on the day of the revered Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, in the God-saved city of Moscow, in the Great Cathedral of the Assumption, the Holy Sobor of the

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 73.

Orthodox Russian Church was opened, in accordance with the rites specially prepared for the occasion by the Holy Synod. The liturgy was sung by Vladimir of Kiev, Platon of Tiflis, and Benjamin of Petrograd. Occupying the seats of honor among the worshipers were the premier minister, A. T. Kerensky, the minister of the interior, N. D. Avksentev, and the minister of confessions, A. V. Kartashev, with his associate, C. A. Kotlyarovsky.[4]

At the second session, which was presided over by Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, the minister of confessions, Kartashev, addressed the Sobor in behalf of the Provisional Government. He laid stress in his speech upon the importance of the Sobor, which, he said, the Provisional Government recognized as the plenary legislative organ of the Russian church; he explained that the government was awaiting the action of the Sobor regarding the new organization of the entire administrative structure of the church, and was ready to withdraw from the jurisdiction of its minister of confessions the hitherto performed ober-procurorial duties, in order to make room for the system devised by the Sobor, as soon as such a scheme should receive the government's approval; thereafter, the Ministry of Confessions would confine its activities to a general oversight of the legal aspects of the working of the new system, leaving the church otherwise autonomous.[5]

This address was followed by a considerable number of other congratulatory speeches, among which it may be worth while to mention speakers like V. N. L'vov, representing the Orthodox church committee of the Duma, and M. V. Rodzyanko, president of the Duma.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 77ff.

As far as the organization of the Sobor was concerned, the conservative party had gained a victory in the pre-Sobor committee which greatly affected the relative powers of the episcopal as against the clerical and lay delegates. The conservatives had gained the concession whereby the Sobor was divided into two "houses" or "curiae": an episcopal one, with special prerogatives to rule and the power to veto any decision of the Sobor, and consequently possessing a substantial balance of power; and the clerical-lay curia, whose position was rendered less influential by reason of the prerogatives of the hierarchy. The liberal party, within the pre-Sobor committee as well as within the Sobor, fought against the measure tooth and nail, but with no result; the struggle, however, was ominously prophetic of the combats to be waged in the future which ultimately were to culminate in an open schism rending the church in twain.

As for the parties within the Sobor, it could not be pronounced entirely conservative, even though it had a comfortable conservative majority. This party, led by the talented and able Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, adopted for its slogan the restoration of the patriarchate, and could not imagine that the white patriarchal cowl could grace any other head than that of their leader. In the second place, the Sobor had a moderate center of a considerable size, largely composed of the lay intelligentsia, and led by such prominent religious personalities as Prince Eugene N. Trubetskoy and Father Sergei N. Bulgakov. On the whole, this group supported the aspirations and the demands of the party of the right, and thus gave that group its dominant influence. Lastly, the radical party of the left was likewise represented, although by

a minority, which was not able to influence greatly the policies of the Sobor.

Among the first items of business taken up by the Sobor was the matter of transferring the parochial and teachers' schools, controlled by the church but supported out of the funds of the state, to the Ministry of Education, together with the proposed radical limitation of the teaching of the catechism. After a vigorous debate regarding these questions, the Sobor decided to protest against the measures, drawing up a resolution roundly denouncing the action of the government. The Sobor demanded from the authorities a change of the law of June 20, which ordered the transfer of the schools and pronounced the stand of the ministry regarding the limitation of the teaching of the catechism hostile to the church. The resolution was delivered by a special delegation, headed by a pronounced conservative hierarch, Bishop Cyrill. In spite of the protestations of the Sobor, the government remained firm in its stand regarding the transfer of the schools, for that had to do with legislation which had already been promulgated; but the delegation gained some concessions regarding the second half of its protest, for the authorities were willing to take it into consideration. The reason for this milder attitude was that the matter of limiting the teaching of the catechism by making the subject elective rather than compulsory was in a preliminary stage of a law-project, and had not yet been promulgated.

The Sobor also gave a great deal of attention to the approaching elections to the Constituent Assembly, which was to give Russia its definite and permanent form of government. Its growing uneasiness in regard

to the policies of the Provisional Government, or rather its increasingly hostile attitude toward that régime, may be easily gathered from an interesting episode occurring at the time of Kornilov's defection. This supreme commander of the Russian armies, disgusted with the inefficiency of the government, started a mutinous march upon Petrograd, at the same time appealing to the Sobor for recognition. His message threw the Sobor into confusion as to the right course of action: it would have gladly seen the Provisional Government crumble, but was not sure of the ultimate success of Kornilov's venture. In a strictly secret meeting (the protocol of which, naturally, does not appear in the official *Acts of the Sobor*) it pondered and deliberated the question. Fortunately, the swift debacle of the supreme commander's revolt relieved the Sobor of the necessity of deciding the delicate question.

Discussion regarding the restoration of the patriarchate became prominent during the first half of the month of September. It was discussed in the section on the supreme church administration, under the chairmanship of Bishop Methodius, where the majority of the members favored it. When the section voted upon the question, it was adopted by fifty-six yeas against thirty-two nays; although this was against the rules, the decision of the section was reported to the Sobor. On September 11, Bishop Methodius made his report before the whole council, recommending the reëstablishment of the patriarchate. The discussion regarding this matter brought to light the most fundamental issues dividing the parties and clearly defined the divergent policies of the two main types of think-

ing among the delegates of the Sobor. The majority of the arguments in favor of the restoration of the patriarchate were based upon the necessity of a strong leader who would be able not only to defend the church against any inimical attempts on the part of the government, but who would at the same time assume an energetic, aggressive policy in the direction of strengthening the interests of the church. It was quite evident that the recent acts of the Provisional Government, such as the creation of the Ministry of Confessions, whereby the Orthodox church was threatened with the loss of its unfair advantages over other Christian communions, and the transfer of the church schools to the control of the Ministry of Education, deeply prejudiced the members of the Sobor against the government. They were in an apprehensive mood, and therefore they desired to organize the supreme office in such a manner as to enable the church to repel the attacks of the non-confessional, (*i.e.* irreligious, as the Sobor interpreted the term) government. This discussion lasted throughout October and might have been continued indefinitely, and with but doubtful results, were it not for the outbreak of the October Revolution, which radically changed the whole aspect of the situation.

On October 25, 1917, the Provisional Government, headed by Kerensky, fell, and the supreme power was seized by the Soviets, *i.e.* that left wing of the socialists, whose attitude toward the church was the most radical. Moscow, where the forces of the overthrown government held the grim ancient tsarist citadel and palace, Kremlin—where, by the way, the Sobor was meeting—resisted the besieging "red" forces for some time longer. It was, therefore, under the thunder

of the guns and roar of battle that the constituent church assembly deliberated about the regeneration of the Russian church.

On October 28, the meeting of the Sobor, under the presidency of the metropolitan of Moscow, Tikhon, was opened by him with a short speech suggesting that the further discussion of the restoration of the patriarchate be dispensed with, and the addresses of the speakers already scheduled be entered into the protocol undelivered. This was seconded by a member of the Sobor, Archpriest Lakhostsky, who stressed the necessity of the restoration of the patriarchate, especially in the difficult period the church was facing; he referred to the imprisonment of the minister of confessions in the Peter and Paul fortress, and stressed that only the patriarch's voice would "sound authoritatively in the political spheres." Tikhon wished to submit this motion to voting without the formality of a discussion, but on account of loud protests against such breach of rules, he permitted Professor Kudryavtsev, one of the radical delegates, to speak; this speaker demanded that the Sobor should first define what the functions and prerogatives, as well as the authority and jurisdiction, of the national Sobors were to be, before the election of the patriarch should take place. Although his voice went unheeded, and the majority wished the discussion dispensed with and an immediate election undertaken, the hierarch who presented the report of the section of the supreme ecclesiastical administration himself urged that the decisive step be postponed till a more opportune time.

The historic day upon which the decision to reinstate the patriarchate was rendered fell on October 30. The meeting was attended by a very small number of

delegates, because the firing in the streets kept many members away on account of the obvious danger of showing themselves in the streets; moreover, some did not expect that the momentous question would be adjudged so precipitously and therefore had absented themselves. Nevertheless, the group in attendance took it upon itself to proceed without delay. The motion to proceed with the adoption of the project of restoration of the patriarchate, without any further discussion, prevailed. When some demanded a count to ascertain whether a quorum was present, the president, Metropolitan Tikhon, answered the question in the affirmative, announcing 317 delegates to be present, thus giving the meeting the required one-half. As it turned out later, during the actual voting, the sum total of all the votes cast amounted to 265, and since the official number of delegates to the Sobor was 564, it follows that a quorum was not present when the most momentous question in the modern history of the Russian church was decided.[6]

But before the actual voting was undertaken, because of many protests, the president permitted some discussion of the question. Those who insisted upon immediate action, on the ground that the meeting had a legal right to proceed by reason of possessing a quorum, urged that it was very doubtful whether the Sobor would be permitted by the new régime ever to meet again, and insisted that in all probability the present was its last meeting; these arguments finally prevailed. The voting itself revealed the fact that the total number of delegates present was only 265, of

[6] Cf. Metropolitan Seraphim's "About the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration," in *Messenger of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church,* 1926, No. 6, p. 22. (In Russian.)

whom 141 voted for the restoration of the patriarchate, 112 against it, and 12 abstained from voting. From this surprising result it is evident that, among the less than one-half of the total number of members of the Sobor who were present at the historic meeting, only a little more than one-half voted for the patriarchate, and that these 141 delegates amounted to just one-quarter of the total number. The enormously important question of the restoration of the patriarchate was thus really carried by only one-fourth of the delegates of the church.[7]

Thereupon the Sobor proceeded with the election of candidates for the patriarchal dignity. It was generally expected that Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), of Kharkov, for a long time the outstanding leader of the patriarchal party and of the conservative hierarchy in general, would undoubtedly be elected patriarch. But the result was different, thanks to the method of procedure adopted for this occasion; the Sobor followed the method which had first been used in 1634 for the election of patriarch Joasaph I, and had been since used in all patriarchal elections. A secret ballot, in which all delegates participated, was held for the purpose of selecting three candidates; the persons receiving the highest number of votes were declared to be the candidates. The first and second vote gave the required majority to Antony, metropolitan of Kharkov, who had been leader of the reactionary *Black Hundred* as well as of the patriarchal party in the Sobor, and who later left Russia in the wake of the defeated Wrangel White Guards; and to Arsenius, archbishop of Novgorod. It was not till the third vote that Tikhon, metropolitan of Moscow, was nominated.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Although this is the order most commonly stated, even by such eye-witnesses as Professor B. V. Titlinov,[8] yet Metropolitan Seraphim in his description[9] reverses the order: he states that Archbishop Arsenius received 199 votes, Metropolitan Tikhon, 162, and Archbishop Antony, 159. The election proper occurred on November 5. The names of the three candidates, carefully sealed in wax rolls of equal size and weight, had been deposited the night before in an urn, placed before the famous icon of the Vladimir Mother of God, which was brought for that purpose from the ancient Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin to the beautiful, comparatively modern Church of the Savior, where the election was in progress. The drawing of lots, whereby the selection of one of the three candidates was left to "the will of God," was described by an eye-witness, Prince Gregory Trubetskoy, in these moving terms:

> I shall never forget the moment when the elder of the recluse-monks, Father Alexius, drew from the urn, which had stood all the previous night before the icon of the Vladimir Mother of God, the slip with the name of the metropolitan of Moscow, Tikhon. The cry of "God's chosen one!" arose throughout the church. And the people from the beginning regarded the prelate as such, seeing in him their father, whom it was possible and necessary to love.[10]

Nevertheless, the method adopted certainly was not adapted to express the real desires of the Sobor, for Metropolitan Tikhon was not the person likely to have

[8] *The Church during the Revolution,* p. 97; also in Vvedensky's *The Church and the Government,* p. 106.
[9] *Op. cit.,* p. 23.
[10] "Reminiscences of Patriarch Tikhon," in *The Way* (Put), Sept., 1925, p. 117. (In Russian.)

been selected had the procedure been that of a direct choice by the Sobor from among the three candidates.

The newly chosen head of the Russian church and its eleventh patriarch was a man of great personal humility; he received the deputation which brought him the official announcement of the supreme dignity in the convent enclosure of the Trinity-Sergei Monastery with a becoming graciousness of manner, and in a convincing mien took the oath of office—to defend the Orthodox church even by the sacrifice of his life.

The committee of the Sobor then hurriedly worked out the long-disused order of services of enthronement of patriarchs. Since the Bolsheviki had not yet taken full charge of the Kremlin, it was possible to hold the service in the ancient patriarchal Cathedral of the Assumption, where the patriarchal throne was still preserved. From the patriarchal treasure-chests the ancient robes were again taken out—the scepter of Metropolitan Peter, the miter, the white cowl and mantle of Patriarch Nikon.

The impressive ceremony of enthronement took place on November 21, 1917. The immense mass of people which gathered to witness the historic occasion crowded within the walls of the Kremlin as well as within the Red Square outside. After the liturgy, two chief metropolitans led the patriarch-elect to the patriarchal throne, while chanting *Axios! Axios! Axios!* and robed him in the vestments of his office. Then the new patriarch led a procession around the Kremlin, sprinkling its walls with the holy water. Even the Red Army soldiers who stood guard there are said to have paid respect to the new hierarch.

A short account of the life of the man who was

placed at the head of the Russian church at the most trying period of its history would be in place here. According to the account of Archpriest A. Rozhdestvensky,[11] Patriarch Tikhon, whose secular name was Basil Ivanovich Belavin, was born in 1866, in Toropets, in the government of Pskov. His father held the post of local priest. Destined for the priesthood, he entered the seminary at Pskov in 1878, and remained there for the next five years. He was of a deeply religious nature, so that his schoolmates used to call him "archpriest" in jest. He then passed on to the Petersburg Theological Academy, where his fellow-students raised his title to that of "patriarch." When Tikhon really became patriarch, these men often recalled their prophetic tomfoolery. His popularity among the fellow-students was deservedly great.

Since all the higher ecclesiastical offices were reserved for the monastic clergy, it was customary for the students of the Academy who aspired after such a career to take upon themselves the monastic vow in the fourth year of their theological studies. But Belavin evidently had no such aspirations, for he graduated from the Academy as a secular, and was called back to the Pskov Seminary as a teacher of theology, serving in that capacity for three years. There his students bore testimony to his gentle ways and manners. It was here, in 1891, that he accepted the monastic vows and received the name of Tikhon. Soon after the young hieromonk was summoned to serve as inspector, and later as rector, of the seminary at Lublin, in the government of Kholm, later being raised to the dignity of bishop of Lublin, and vicar of the Kholm eparchy. From this position he was called to become the head of the Russian church of

[11] *The Most Holy Tikhon,* Sophia. (In Russian.)

the North American continent. His stay of nine years in a country where the conditions of life were unfamiliar and widely divergent from those to which he was accustomed, as well as the really formidable task of superintending the scattered Russian communities distributed not only over the length and breadth of the United States, but over Canada, Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands as well, according to his own testimony greatly broadened his outlook upon life and served him in good stead later. It was during his administration that the episcopal see was removed from San Francisco to New York; and the recollections of Tikhon are quite vivid among his parishioners of the latter city. Tikhon returned to Russia only once during his American term of office, and was on that occasion elevated to the archepiscopal dignity. In 1907 he was called to administer one of the ancient and important eparchies, Yaroslavl, but six years later was transferred by the Holy Synod to the see of Vilna, in Russian Poland, where he was faced with the delicate task of dealing with the numerous Uniates as well as Roman Catholics, and not the least with the Orthodox Russians who were filled with hatred for the Poles. This difficult task required uncommon skill and tact on the part of the head of the church there, but he acquitted himself of it remarkably well. When the World War broke out, Tikhon's eparchy became a center of battle. He was obliged to leave the city and took refuge in Moscow, later returning to his see and living on its eastern boundary line in the town of Disna. When the Moscow metropolitan of Rasputin fame, Macarius, was removed by the Provisional Government in 1917, Tikhon was selected to fill the vacant throne of this chief of the Russian eparchies, and it was from this position that he was elevated, in

the same year, to the highest dignity within the gift of the Russian church, that of the patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia.

When the Sobor addressed itself to the definition of the respective spheres of jurisdiction of the patriarchate and the Sobor, two possibilities presented themselves: either to endow the restored patriarchate with powers similar to those possessed by the patriarchs prior to the time of Peter the Great, or to make the synodical, *i.e.* collegiate form of government, dominant in the church. The former proposal could be characterized as the more aristocratic and hierarchical, but it had the sanction of tradition and of historical precedent on its side; the latter was much more democratic, since the Synod was to have a goodly proportion of laymen among its membership, but it looked too much like an innovation.

The final decision of the Sobor regarding this momentous question was rendered early in November, and resulted in a skillful compromise between the two competing propositions. It was ruled on November 4, that "in the Russian Orthodox Church the supreme authority, legislative, administrative, judicial, and supervisory, belongs to the local Sobor, assembled periodically at fixed intervals, and consisting of bishops, clergy, and laymen." [12]

This, then, was a signal victory for the supporters of the second proposition. Nevertheless, the hierarchical party also won a substantial concession in the second article, which ruled that "the patriarchate is restored, and the ecclesiastical administration is headed by a

[12] *Decisions Regarding the Supreme and Eparchial Administration of the Orthodox Church by the Sobor of 1917-1918,* Warsaw, 1922. p. 3. (In Russian.)

patriarch. 3. The patriarch holds the first place among bishops of equal rank. 4. The patriarch, together with the organs of church administration, is subject to the Sobor." [13]

It is evident, therefore, that the patriarch, by the provision of the Constitution, was rendered amenable to the Sobor, and could by no means play an autocratic rôle, such as Russia had experienced during the previous period of the patriarchate. He was really not much more than the chief executive, entrusted with "the care of the internal and external welfare of the Russian church." [14] He convoked the Sobors and by virtue of his office presided at their sessions. But during the interim between the meetings of the Sobor, two elective bodies were associated with him in governing the church: the Holy Synod and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council. The patriarch served as president of these bodies, and had a veto power over all their actions and decisions. His veto suspended all propositions which he opposed till the decision of the next Sobor. Indeed, the patriarch even had the right of acting independently of these bodies, if in his judgment the well-being of the church demanded such a course, but his actions were then subject to the approval or disapproval of the next Sobor. He was likewise charged with the dangerous duty of "making protests to the government" against encroachments or other inimical actions. He supervised the appointment of bishops to vacant eparchial cathedras, in order that they might be filled within a reasonable time; although he did not appoint the bishops, he had the right to advise them regarding their personal life as well as the fulfillment

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

of their episcopal duties. In case his advice was disregarded, he referred the case to the Holy Synod; he could arbitrate in cases of personal controversies between bishops, if his jurisdiction was voluntarily sought, but he received all complaints against bishops, and instituted proceedings against them. The patriarch's name was recited at all liturgical services of the church. Besides these general duties inherent in his office as patriarch, he also served as the diocesan bishop of the patriarchal province, which comprised the diocese of Moscow and the Stavrapigial monasteries of the Russian church (*i.e.* such monasteries as were directly subject to the jurisdiction of the supreme church administration); but his duties as diocesan bishop were delegated to the patriarch's *locum tenens,* who had the title of archbishop of Kolomna and Mozhaisk. The supreme authority of the Sobor was likewise preserved by the provision that the patriarch, who was elected for life, might be impeached by the Sobor for policies or acts regarded as detrimental or destructive of the vital interests of the church, and in conjunction with other Eastern patriarchs he might in such a case be tried and deprived of his office. Since these provisions came to have enormous importance, because of their direct bearing upon later events, it is best to give them in full:

8. In case the patriarch should fail in his duties, then, in accordance with the nature of the failure, the three eldest members of the Holy Synod, or members of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council of archiepiscopal rank should make a brotherly representation to the patriarch; should that representation fail of result, they should make a second representation, and in case this also is fruitless, they should adopt further measures in accordance with article 10.

9. Complaints against the patriarch shall be directed to the Holy Synod through the eldest hierarch from the membership of the Synod.

10. In case the patriarch should infringe the rights or duties of his office, the question whether his acts involve culpability should be decided by a joint meeting of the Holy Synod and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council. His indictment and trial devolve upon the All-Russian Sobor of bishops, to which, as far as possible, the other patriarchs and representatives of autocephalous churches should be invited; in such a case, the indictment, as well as the condemnatory verdict, requires no less than two-thirds of effective votes.

The two elective legislative bodies which were associated with the patriarch in the management of the government, the Holy Synod and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council, divided between themselves the various functions appertaining to the administration. The Holy Synod, which was hierarchical in the character of its personnel, consisted of the president-patriarch and twelve bishops: six were chosen by the Sobor for the term of three years, five others represented the five ecclesiastical administrative divisions into which Russia was divided (the Northwest, the Southwest, the Central, the Eastern, and the Siberian, which included North America, and the Japanese, Chinese, and Persian missions) and were invited in succession for the term of one year, and the number was brought up to twelve by the inclusion in the group by the metropolitan of Kiev, who was granted this privilege in deference to the historic claims of his city, which is "the mother of the Russian cities" and the original home of the Russian hierarchy. Eligibility for election by the Sobor was contingent upon the length of actual service

in his particular episcopal see, which must be not less than two years. The functions of the Holy Synod related mostly to the inner life of the church. Its jurisdiction extended over the matters of administration, doctrine, liturgy, priestly as well as parochial education, discipline, supervision of the missionary enterprises, and censorship of religious books.

The Supreme Ecclesiastical Council was more democratic in its character, and besides the president-patriarch consisted of fifteen members: three bishops from the Holy Synod, selected by the patriarch or the Sobor, the rest being selected by the Sobor and drawn from the following ranks: five were selected from among the lower clergy (either presbyters, deacons, or singers), six were laymen, and one was a monk representing the monastic order. The Council was elected "for the period between the two Sobors (three years)." This, by the way, is the only definite mention of the length of the intervening period between the Sobors. Its sphere of activity concerned mainly the external relations of the church, such as the administration, economics, and finances; business concerns such as the synodical press; direction of the academies; the legal aspects of the life of the church, and similar matters.

But there were many matters which required the joint deliberations of the two bodies. In such instances, both organizations met conjointly. Besides, members of both bodies had the right of initiation of any subject, by presenting it to the patriarch, who then allocated it to the proper body for deliberation. All members were required to vote and to sign the decisions of their respective group. Decisions were passed by a mere majority vote. The patriarch had

the right of a veto and held the customary right to vote in case of a tie.

The diocesan government was likewise modeled after this combination of the hierarchical with the democratic principles. The legislative body, known as the diocesan assembly, was democratically constituted of clerical and lay members, equal in number. This was a deliberative, legislative organization. The bishop, assisted by a diocesan council of five, three of whom were priests, was the executive head of the diocese, but administered his territory in coöperation with the diocesan assembly. In case of a disagreement, the bishop could carry out his policy in spite of the opposition of the legislative organ, but was responsible for his action to the Sobor.

Very remarkable, likewise, was the legislation concerning the election of bishops. The number of bishops was greatly increased, so that every large city had a bishop of its own. When an episcopal vacancy occurred, the bishops of the district, or if there were no district organizations, the Holy Synod, prepared a list of candidates, including those nominated by the diocese. After the publication of this list of candidates in the diocese, all the bishops of the district, as well as such as had been appointed by the Holy Synod to take part in the election, together with the clergy and the laymen of the diocese, jointly voted for the nominee of their choice. In order to be elected, he must receive no less than two-thirds of the votes cast. The bishop-elect was then confirmed by the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council.

Qualifications for the episcopal office comprised the following requirements: the candidate must be at least thirty-five years of age; he must be a monk, or

an unmarried clergyman, or might even be a layman. In the case of clergymen or laymen, if the candidate did not assume the monastic vow, he must at least wear monastic garb. The candidate must likewise possess a fitting education, as well as the necessary moral qualities. He was then elected for life.[15]

Further democratization of the administration of the church is noticeable in the division of every diocese into parochial districts, locally governed by parochial assemblies, consisting of all the clergy of the district, together with an equal number of lay representatives of the parishes. Each local parish was likewise governed by a local assembly, and the members of the parish were definitely registered as belonging to that one unit and no other; this, too, was an innovation of considerable importance, and indicated the new spirit which was introduced into the ecclesiastical administration. It might be mentioned that this blend of the episcopal with the presbyterian polities was not original with the Russian church, as far as the Eastern communions were concerned, for an essentially similar scheme had been in operation in the Rumanian church in Transylvania since 1868.[16]

Besides this really remarkable reconstruction of the administrative system of the church, the Sobor declared the independence of the church from the state in all religious and ecclesiastical matters, the monastic life was newly regulated, and the Edinovertsi were permitted to maintain their own bishops. The Sobor likewise encouraged preaching in the congregations, a thing

[15] All the foregoing description of the duties and obligations of the patriarchate and the other organs of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration is based upon the official *Decisions* already cited.

[16] See Seton-Watson: "Transylvania since 1867," in *The Slavonic Review*, June, 1925.

which was formerly almost entirely neglected; addressed itself to the reorganization of clerical education; and provided measures for the support of the work of the church.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE SOVIET RÉGIME

The fears so freely expressed before the election of the patriarch that the Sobor might be dispersed by the Soviet authorities, or at least that its freedom of action might be restricted, proved unfounded. Nobody interfered with the election of the patriarch, and the authorities even permitted the transfer of the meeting of the Sobor for the election of the patriarch to the Church of the Savior, which is outside the walls of the Kremlin. In the political field, the Soviet of National Commissars at first permitted the completion of the elections for the Constituent Assembly, so that there was no ostensible reason for disturbing the work which was carried on by the ecclesiastical constituent assembly. At any rate, no interference was experienced by that body.

But in December, 1917, a number of decrees appeared which could be regarded as the beginning of the new legal *modus vivendi* for the church and the state: on December 4, in accordance with the program so assiduously propagated before the new masters had seized the supreme power, a decree was issued by which all land was declared a national landed fund, to be controlled by land committees. It was explicitly stated that the lands owned by ecclesiastical or monastic institutions were likewise included within the scope of

the law. Thus the church lost a great part of its income overnight, so to speak, and was soon to face an even greater loss.

On December 11, the law regarding the nationalization of the land was succeeded by a decree issued by the Commissariat of National Education, ordering all schools whatsoever to be turned over to that department. This law was a great deal more drastic than the one of June 20, passed by the Provisional Government: the latter had reference only to parochial schools and ecclesiastical institutions for teachers which were supported from state funds. The December law made no such distinctions, and confiscated even the technically professional schools, such as the seminaries and theological academies, irrespective of how they were supported, although many of them, as a matter of fact, were actually supported by state funds. Thus the church was deprived of all means of educating the young, even for the priesthood. Moreover, in the last paragraph of the decree a passing mention was made to the effect that the "question of churches would be defined in connection with the decree of separation of the church from the state." Thus the church was likewise given a warning as to what was in store for it.

Within a week, another decree appeared which betrayed the radical, uncompromising attitude assumed by the new régime toward matters traditionally under the control of the church: this was the decree concerning civil marriage and civil birth registration, which was published on December 18. In accordance with this legislation, the Russian republic acknowledged only civil marriages; for the registration of births and deaths governmental bureaus were established, and ecclesiastical authorities were instructed to turn over

to the government the recording books and registers which they had hitherto kept. Marriage solemnized only ecclesiastically lost its civil acknowledgment, although it was optional whether or not such ceremony might supplement the civil registry. The civil divorce completed this process, for the jurisdiction in this field, formerly chiefly in the hands of ecclesiastical authorities, was now put wholly in the competence of the civil administration.

Finally, in January, 1918, shortly before the publication of the decree concerning the separation of the church from the state, a decree was issued which stopped all financial aid for the purposes of religious worship, but the salaries of priests and catechists were continued till March 1.

On January 23, 1918, the most important piece of legislation was published in the decree of separation of the church from the state, and the school from the church, which radically changed the mutual relations between these institutions, and caused such a thoroughgoing reorganization of the entire inner as well as the outer life of the church of Russia that it is difficult to exaggerate its magnitude or importance. This momentous historic document was at first published in the papers under the title of *Freedom of Conscience and of Religious Societies;* [1] but later it was incorporated into the *Collected Laws* [2] under the caption of *Separation of the Church from the State, and the School from the Church,* and since then it has retained that title. The text in full reads as follows:

[1] R. V. Gidulyanov: *Separation of the Church from the State,* 3d ed., Moscow, 1926, prints the official text of the document. (In Russian.)

[2] 1918, No. 18, p. 203.

1. The church is separated from the state.

2. Within the confines of the Republic it is prohibited to issue any local laws or regulations restricting or limiting freedom of conscience, or establishing privileges or preferential rights of any kind based upon the religious confession of the citizens.

3. Every citizen may profess any religion or none. All restrictions of rights connected with the profession of any belief whatsoever, or with the non-profession of any belief, are annulled.

Note: All reference to citizens' membership in religious groups, or their non-membership, shall be removed from all official documents.

4. The governmental functions, or those of other publico-juridical institutions, shall not be accompanied by religious rites or ceremonies.

5. A free performance of religious rites is guaranteed as long as it does not interfere with public order, and is not accompanied by interference with the rights of citizens of the Soviet Republic. Local authorities possess the right in such cases to adopt all necessary measures to preserve public order and safety.

6. No one may refuse to perform his civil duties on account of his religious views.

Exception to this rule, on condition that one civil duty be exchanged for another, may be granted in each individual case by decision of the People's Court.

7. Religious vows and oaths are abrogated.

8. Acts of civil nature are registered solely by the civil authorities: the departments for the registration of marriages and births.

9. The school is separated from the church.

Instruction in religious doctrines is not permitted in any governmental and common schools, nor in private teaching institutions where general subjects are taught.

Citizens may give or receive religious instruction in a private manner.

10. All ecclesiastical or religious associations are subject to the general regulations regarding private associations and unions, and shall enjoy no privileges or subsidies, whether from the government, or from local autonomous or self-governing institutions.

11. Compulsory demand of collections or dues for the support of ecclesiastical or religious associations, as well as measures of compulsion or punishment adopted by such associations in respect to their members, are not permitted.

12. No ecclesiastical or religious association has the right to possess property.

13. All properties of the existing ecclesiastical and religious associations in Russia are declared to form national wealth. Buildings and objects specifically appointed for purposes of worship shall be delivered, in accordance with the regulations of the local or the central governmental authorities, to responsible religious associations for their use, free of charge.

It is difficult to visualize quickly and completely the tremendous change which the laconic first article of the decree implied. The Russian state, since the days of St. Vladimir, for well-nigh one thousand years, down to the March Revolution, was a religiously confessional state; its innermost policy has been admirably characterized in the famous formula of Count Uvarov: Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationalism. The Orthodox church has always been the chief national religious institution, and as such has been fostered by the government by special privileges, state financial support, a prerogative to educate the rising generations of Russia in the principles of Orthodoxy as well as autocracy, and by the closest administrative ties, for the head of

the Russian state was also the divinely appointed head of the church on its temporal side. It has already been mentioned how resolutely the church protested against any schemes or intentions of the Provisional Government to deprive it of any part of these ancient prerogatives, or to disestablish it.

With the publication of the January decree, the worst fears of the church were realized: the government of the formerly "holy Russia" organized itself on a strictly secular basis, and severing all connections with any type of ecclesiastical or religious communion, leveled them all to the same *niveau* of private associations, possessing no official standing whatever and shorn of all former privileges. The actual situation, as a matter of fact, was even worse, for there existed between the two bodies a tacit understanding of irreconcilable opposition amounting to open hostility. The new government had every reason to fear the church, for that institution represented the only functioning organization within Russia which was able to offer resistance to the pretensions of the new masters of the country; moreover, this potential enemy was imbued with the spirit which had animated the former tsarist régime, for the church survived the overthrow of that government as the sole incarnation of the theocratic principle. The Bolsheviki, still uncertain of success in their stupendous venture of attempting to seize the reins of government, and of fomenting a world revolution, necessarily were obliged to feel apprehensive regarding the potential strength of their ecclesiastical foe. In these psychological conditions governing the situation as it developed late in 1917, lay, as in a nutshell, the entire future policies of the two rival powers.

In spite of the danger of antagonizing the church to the point of irreconcilable opposition, the Soviet authorities boldly stated their determination to secularize the government in every sense of that word. The second article of the decree was construed to deprive the formerly dominant Russian Orthodox Church of its unfair privileges and advantages, and make all religious organizations equal as far as the attitude of the state toward them was concerned. Although it did not say it in so many words, yet the clear implication of the legislation was to make religion a purely private, personal affair, in no way affecting the civil or legal standing of the individual. Under the Kerensky government, a half-hearted attempt looking ultimately toward the same goal had been made, but it took the determined, uncompromising attitude of the Soviet authorities to put it into practice outright.

Nevertheless, it would be a fundamental mistake to regard the Soviet government as atheistic in the sense of imposing atheism upon the whole country. Article 3 unequivocally granted liberty of conscience and a free profession of any creed or none at all. It may be remarked here that the Communist Party is officially atheistic, and every member of it is obliged to confess that creed; but the Russian government, in distinction from the Communist Party, proclaims itself to be entirely extraconfessional, secular, *i.e.* it grants freedom of both religious and anti-religious confession and propaganda. This paragraph of the January decree became the Magna Charta of all those religious communions which hitherto had not possessed full religious liberty. It must be borne in mind that in spite of the gradual alleviation of the lot of the non-Orthodox

communions in Russia, there had still existed a great deal of discrimination against them. It was not till now that the various "sectarians," of whom there are, according to their own estimate, some fifteen millions, as well as other Christian and non-Christian communions, became fully free. It is well to remember that formerly religious affiliation had a great practical influence and bearing upon the career of the citizen; the sweeping away of this unjust discrimination would have been even a greater boon had it not been supplanted by discrimination based upon party politics. As for a free confession of the doctrines and dogmas of atheism, the supplanted tsarist régime had made that a subject for the criminal law. The gain in liberty in this respect amounted to a full one hundred percent, although the Provisional Government had likewise granted freedom to non-confessionals.

The former "holy Russia" loudly proclaimed the close alliance of its church and state by connecting all public functions with religious symbolism or ceremonial, and by accompanying them by religious rites. The new secular government, logically enough, must disassociate itself from all such connections. Religion being a private affair, all public buildings and places must be free from its symbolism. Hence the fourth article, in consequence of which all religious symbols and icons were taken out of all governmental buildings, schools, railroad stations, and other public institutions, and their places for the greater part taken by pictures of Lenin and other Bolshevik worthies, whose cult bears a close resemblance to that of the icons. Public religious processions could not be held without their previous authorization by the local soviets. Vio-

lation of these provisions was punishable by forced labor up to three months, or a fine up to three hundred gold rubles. It is remarkable, however, to notice that the old, black, two-headed imperial eagles have retained their proud position on the top of the Kremlin towers, so that it is somewhat incongruous to see the red flag floating over the administration buildings in the Kremlin within easy sight of the gate-towers topped with the black tsarist eagles. The church was free to carry on its own proper work undisturbed, provided it confined it to the buildings intended for worship. Thus public religious services might be freely performed in all churches, their freedom having been guaranteed by the January decree.

With the separation of the church from the state, the former institution necessarily lost certain privileges which were highly prized by its members, and their loss was consequently keenly felt. Thus, for instance, the clergy lost their legal exemption from military service as well as other privileges which formerly they possessed by reason of their clerical calling. This was the sense of the sixth article, although at the same time it clearly specified that the military duty might be exchanged for another, and thus the clergy were not directly forced into the military service. Moreover, there are in Russia many pacifist sects which reject war and military service on the grounds of religious conviction; these, too, were envisaged in the provision. Oaths required by courts to substantiate depositions, or required upon taking office or entering the army, were likewise dispensed with, as implying religious presupposition, *i.e.* calling upon God. Later, when the question regarding the character of the solemn promise required upon entering the Red army was raised, the

ceremony was officially pronounced to be of a purely civil character.[4]

Further deprivation of the clergy of their former semi-official public standing concerned the recording of births and registry of marriages, for the ecclesiastical records were the sole official records of such events, and consequently were of great importance. These functions, by the provisions of the eighth article, were now taken over by the state.

The keenly felt reduction of the importance of the church may be realized if one recalls that in the old Russia the life of the people was inextricably interwoven with the functions and ministrations of the church, because all the major events of an individual's life were closely bound with the sacraments and rites of the church. This applied not only to births, marriages, and deaths, but to innumerable other ministrations both of private and corporate character, so that life normally expressed itself through religious services and rites. All of this was greatly diminished now, even though not forbidden. At any rate, all religious ministration now lost its official character. As formerly the matriculation of births, kept by every parish priest, was regarded as the legal governmental registry, so now the Soviet government by taking over these functions and secularizing them made itself to that degree more vital to the life of an ordinary citizen. All registration books of the various religious communities were required to be turned over to the authorities, even though commonly this was not done. The birth of a child must henceforth be reported to the local Soviet officials and witnessed by the testimony of two persons

[4] "Decision of the People's Com. of Justice," April 22, 1922, in *Revolution and the Church,* 1-3, 1923.

(parents, if so desired). Then the child may be baptized, if the parents so wish. If this is the case, the fact forms no part of the official record and has no civil significance or importance. The mother may, within three months after the birth of the child, inform the officials of the name of the true father; this information is then made known to the designated person, and if within two weeks he makes no protest, his name is entered as that of the father of the child, and he is liable for its support up to one-third of his income. In case the identity of the father is not known, and several men are under suspicion, they may all be held responsible for the maintenance of the child.

According to the marriage law published on December 20, 1917,[5] only the civil marriage, registered before the proper governmental authorities, was regarded as binding upon the parties to it and conferred legal protection guaranteed by the laws. A marriage solemnized with ecclesiastical rites conferred no legal rights and entailed no legal obligations upon those who contracted it. Of course, those who chose to cohabit without either of these methods of announcing their marriage were free to do so, and were subject to no penalties. But without the prescribed registration before the authorities, no such or any other marriage entitled the parties to any legal rights guaranteed to those who complied with the regulations of the law. A new code of laws is in effect since January, 1927, which makes provision for legalization of marriage even without the initial registration.[6]

Similarly, all cemeteries, crematoria, and morgues

[5] Cf. *Marriage Law*, p. 52, Part I.
[6] Cf. A. Meyendorff: "Soviet Family Law," in *The Slavonic Review*, March, 1927.

passed into the sole administration of the local soviets. No distinction was made between the different stations of the citizens as far as the funeral was concerned, and the prescribed procedure was in all cases identical. Religious services were permitted, but were paid for separately by the relatives, although the fees were stipulated by regulations. The rest of the expenses were borne by the local soviets.[7]

Of enormous importance was article 9, which separated the school from the church. Again, this was a logical deduction from the fundamental principle of secularizing the government, and it is easy for an American to understand why the separation of the church from the state necessarily implied a like separation of the school from the church. A thoroughly secularized, non-confessional government could not teach religion in its schools, for some one type of confessional instruction would have to be selected, which would unjustly ignore other types, and thus nullify the provision of liberty of conscience. It would be equally out of the question to attempt to teach all shades of religious interpretation. The only logical solution of the problem was to proceed in essentially the same manner in which the Soviet decree did. But when one recalls the stormy and violent opposition of the church to the milder program of the Provisional Government, it then becomes clear what a depth of resentment the radical action of the Soviet authorities must have stirred. For now all school buildings, the parochial common schools, the teachers' institutes, as well as the technically professional seminaries and theological academies, were confiscated, and the church was deprived of all means of even training its own priest-

[7] Cf. Krasikov: *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

hood, not to speak of the lost influence over the masses of the common people.

Articles 10 to 13 were highly effective blows aimed at the disorganization of the church by taking away its corporate juridical character and destroying its assured economic basis. Religion being reduced to a private affair, religious organizations were pronounced merely private organizations, such as any club for any kind of purpose would be. Moreover, these associations lost the right to own property, and such property as they possessed hitherto was declared to belong to the nation, *i.e.* the government. All subsidies, which in the good old tsarist days amounted to a matter of sixty million rubles, were stopped, and in accordance with the law of January 20, within a month all payments to the clergy would cease. How could the church effect the tremendous change of shifting its economic basis from a state-supported institution to one voluntarily supported by its members without being given several years necessarily required for such a task? Theoretically, the measure could not be objected to as inherently unjust, for a definitely secularized state, sundered from the church so completely as the Soviet government was, could not be expected to support the whole ecclesiastical establishment of the vast country. But the precipitate action of the government in disendowing the church on a month's notice could be viewed in no other light than that of a willful disregard of the tremendously difficult position into which the church was so suddenly hurled, if not of a downright secret design to disorganize the ecclesiastical machinery. It was indeed in just such a light that the action was viewed by the vast majority of the Russian people themselves.

It may be remarked that in itself the loss of the thirty-three millions allotted to the church by the Provisional Government (for the remaining odd thirty millions were refused the church when the government took over the parochial schools supported from the state treasury) could readily be made up by voluntary support, had there been time to institute such a system. Counting one hundred millions of Orthodox membership—for the church always claimed to possess that number—it would amount to thirty-three kopeks (about sixteen cents) a year per capita to make good the loss of the state subsidy. But the matter was rendered difficult by the precipitous action of the government in not affording the necessary time to institute any other scheme.

The church, thus completely stripped of its former privileges and its assured financial support, was thrown entirely upon its own resources; it ceased to be a governmental organization, it lost even its juridical rights as well as all its property, and was reduced to the rank of private "associations for worship." As in every country where the church is supported solely by the voluntary contributions of its members, the process of training the constituency in the sense of responsibility for its maintenance is of long duration, and the period of educating the membership in this sense inevitably entails upon the church a considerable amount of hardship, if not actual suffering. It must furthermore be realized that the country was absolutely drained of its resources and to all intents and purposes was bankrupt. The outlook for the church, under these conditions, was appalling, and quite rightly so. Nothing but a real service meeting the definite needs of the Russian people could ultimately save it.

It must be remembered, further, that the church was not permitted to levy any compulsory payments or church tax upon its members, and that it could employ no compulsory means to enforce support from them. It must gain its support solely by voluntary offerings given freely by the worshipers. To be sure, the church buildings, declared to be property of the nation, were given back to the congregations upon their complying with certain regulations regarding the procedure, and both the buildings and the equipment were to be used by the congregation free of charge. Nevertheless, the burden of providing for the salary of the priest and the running expenses were weighing heavily upon the shoulders of a congregation hitherto unaccustomed to any such impositions.

Taken separately and abstractly, the decree of January 23, 1918, was not essentially unjust, and could not be said to constitute a deliberate attempt to destroy the church. But because of the violent and abrupt manner in which the old, accustomed order of things was terminated, it was certainly—and it could not be otherwise than consciously—calculated to throw the church into such internal disorders and overwhelming difficulties that it could be said to be in the highest degree devastating. The enmity between the two factors which had been in evidence since the seizure of power on the part of the Soviet government now had a definite basis of recognized and clearly enunciated grievances, and a death struggle between the foes was inevitable.

It may be remarked, lastly, that the decree dealt with the various provisions in too generalizing a way, so that many of the articles were not clear and needed further legislative elucidation. The church ceased to

be a juridical entity; but what, by a new legal definition, constituted a parish, or a local congregation? What was the precise mode in which the use of church buildings and equipment might be obtained by them? The children could not receive religious instruction in school; where and how could they receive it? All schools, including the professional training schools for clergy—seminaries and theological academies—were taken over by the state: where was the church to train its future priesthood? How was it to support these schools, and how could it even possess them, since it was forbidden to possess property? Would the state then provide such schools? That certainly would not be a likely thing to expect. All these, and many other problems were, for the time being, left undefined, and in the meantime caused indignation and intense heartburning in the bosom of the church people. It could not be otherwise: causes necessarily implying mutual conflict, and a desperate one at that, were too numerous and too deep-seated not to motivate both parties to open action. The proud old institution of the church, so highly privileged formerly, could not accept the humble station without a stiff fight to retain at least something of its old standing; the fanatical, doctrinaire zeal of the believers in the communistic panacea, like all ardent religious zealots, could not trim their policy so that the winds would become somewhat tempered to the very closely shorn ecclesiastical lamb. Hence, the necessary result: war.

What, then, were the concrete measures adopted by the church to defend itself against the execution of the radical legislation of the Soviet government? The church replied by open resistance to the measures, and

its opposition broke out even before the January decree was issued. It will be recalled that the decree nationalizing all property in Russia was issued in December, 1917; this order, of course, included ecclesiastical property of all kinds. The first attempt to take over ecclesiastical property occurred when the government sent an official to take over the Alexandro-Nevsky Monastery in Petrograd. The official in charge demanded the surrender of all the cash money and all other assets whatsoever to be taken over by the Ministry of Welfare; but the head of the monastery refused to surrender the property. His stand was approved by the entire monastic community, which voted at their meeting not to surrender any part of the property and to oppose any attempt on the part of the government to disperse them.[8] As a result of this, and other attempts, to confiscate ecclesiastical property, Patriarch Tikhon, acting alone because the Sobor at the time was not in session on account of the Christmas holiday recess, issued a most important proclamation in which he roundly anathematized the authors of such an attempt upon the property of the church, as well as any who would obey it. This document is a veritable declaration of war on the part of the church, and because of its importance it is deemed wise to cite it in full:

The humble Tikhon,
by God's grace patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia, to the beloved in the Lord hierarchs, clergy, and all faithful members of the Russian Orthodox church.

The Lord will deliver us from this present evil world. (Gal. i. 4.)

The Holy Orthodox church of Christ is at present

[8] Cf. Vvedensky: *op. cit.*, pp. 120-124.

passing through difficult times in the Russian land; the open and secret foes of the truth of Christ began persecuting that truth, and are striving to destroy the work of Christ by sowing everywhere in place of Christian love the seeds of malice, hatred, and fratricidal warfare.

The commands of Christ regarding the love of neighbor are forgotten or trampled upon; reports reach us daily concerning the astounding and beastly murders of wholly innocent people, and even of the sick upon their sick-beds, who are guilty perhaps only of having fulfilled their duty to the Fatherland, and of having spent all their strength in the service of the national welfare. This happens not only under cover of the nocturnal darkness, but openly in daylight, with hitherto unheard of audacity and merciless cruelty, without any sort of trial and despite all right and lawfulness, and it happens in our days almost in all the cities and villages of our country, as well as in our capital, and outlying regions (Petrograd, Moscow, Irkutsk, Sevastopol, and others).

All this fills our heart with a deep and bitter sorrow and obliges us to turn to such outcasts of the human race with stern words of accusation and warning, in accordance with the command of the holy apostle: "them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear." (I Tim. v. 20.)

Recall yourselves, ye senseless, and cease your bloody deeds. For what you are doing is not only a cruel deed; it is in truth a satanic act, for which you shall suffer the fire of Gehenna in the life to come, beyond the grave, and the terrible curses of posterity in this present, earthly life.

By the authority given us by God, we forbid you to present yourselves for the sacraments of Christ, and anathematize you, if you still bear the name of Chris-

tians, even if merely on account of your baptism you still belong to the Orthodox church.

I adjure all of you who are faithful children of the Orthodox church of Christ, not to commune with such outcasts of the human race in any matter whatsoever: "cast out the wicked from among you." (I Cor. v. 13.)

The most cruel persecution has likewise arisen against the holy church of Christ: the blessed sacraments, sanctifying the birth of man into the world, or blessing the marital union of the Christian family, have been pronounced unnecessary and superfluous; the holy churches are subjected either to destruction by reason of the gunfire directed against them (*e.g.* the holy cathedrals of the Moscow Kremlin), or to plunder and sacrilegious injury (*e.g.* the Chapel of the Savior in Petrograd). The saintly monasteries revered by the people (as the Alexandro-Nevsky and Pochaevsky monasteries) are seized by the atheistic masters of the darkness of this world and are declared to be in some manner national property; schools, supported from the resources of the Orthodox church to train the ministers of churches and teachers of the faith, are declared superfluous, and are turned either into training institutes of infidelity or even directly into nurseries of immorality.

Property of monasteries and Orthodox churches is alienated from them under the guise of being national property, but without any right and even without any desire to act in accordance with the lawful will of the nation. . . . Finally, the government which is pledged to uphold right and truth in Russia, and to guarantee liberty and order everywhere, manifests only the most unbridled caprice and crassest violence over all and especially in dealing with the holy Orthodox church.

Where are the limits to such mockery of the church of Christ? How and wherein may the attacks upon it by its raging enemies be stopped?

We appeal to all of you, believing and faithful children of the church: rise up in defense of our injured and oppressed holy Mother!

The enemies of the church seize rule over her and her property by force of death-dealing weapons; but you rise to oppose them with the strength of your faith, with your own nation-wide outcry which would stop those senseless people and would show them that they have no right to call themselves protagonists of the people's welfare, initiators of a new life in accordance with the national ideal, for they are directly against the conscience of the people.

And if it should become necessary to suffer in behalf of the cause of Christ, we invite you, beloved children of the church, to suffer along with us in accordance with the words of the holy apostle: "Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans viii. 35.)

And you, brethren hierarchs and clergy, do not lose even an hour in your spiritual task, and with fiery zeal call upon your members to defend the impugned rights of the Orthodox church; convene religious gatherings; appeal not because of necessity, but take your place in the ranks of spiritual warriors of your own free choice, and oppose to the external violence the force of your genuine spirituality; we then positively affirm that the enemies of the church of Christ shall be shamed and shall be dispersed by the might of the cross of Christ, for the promise of the divine Cross-bearer is immutable: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.)

TIKHON, *Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia*
January 19, 1918.[9]

This proclamation was then read at the first meeting of the Sobor held after the Christmas recess, and received full, and even enthusiastic, reception and approval there. Many were the speeches in which violent language was addressed to the new authorities, and the representatives of the church pledged themselves to the coming struggle: "We shall die for the Russian Orthodox Church."[10] The Sobor, therefore, adopted the following resolution, strongly confirming the proclamation of Patriarch Tikhon:

The holy Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church lovingly welcomes the proclamation of the holy patriarch Tikhon, punishing the malicious evil-doers and convicting the enemies of the church of Christ. From the elevation of the patriarchal throne a word of warning has thundered and the spiritual sword is raised against those who are constantly scoffing at the sanctities of the national faith and conscience. The holy Sobor bears testimony that it remains in the fullest unanimity with the father and intercessor of the Russian church, responds to his challenge, and is ready to suffer in confessing the faith of Christ, its despisers notwithstanding. The holy Sobor calls upon the whole Russian church with its hierarchs and clergy at the head to rally around the patriarch, that our holy faith may not be reviled.[11]

The Sobor likewise adopted the report of its previously appointed committee on drawing up instructions

[9] Vvedensky: *op. cit.*, pp. 114-116, where the official protocol of the meeting of the Sobor is given in full.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

regarding the mode of procedure in case the government authorities should attempt to put into execution the decree nationalizing the ecclesiastical property. These instructions were very definite, and admirably manifested the spirit of determined opposition and resistance to the new laws which actuated the church. The main points were as follows:

1. Not to surrender anything whatsoever voluntarily to the plunderers of the sacred possessions of the church, but to guard it according to the example of our pious ancestors.
2. In case of a forcible demand by anyone whatsoever of any part of the ecclesiastical or monastic property, the superior of the church or the monastery should refuse, turning upon the violators with appropriate words of exhortation.
3. The plunderers and robbers of ecclesiastical and monastic property whose names are known should be reported to the eparchial superior, in order that in cases especially revolting they may be excommunicated from ecclesiastical fellowship. (The Neo-canon of St. Gregory, rule 3.)
4. In case a whole village proves to be guilty of sacrilege and acts of scoffing at sacred things, the eparchial superior shall order all divine ministrations stopped (with the exception of the sacrament of baptism and of the administration to the sick of the body and blood of Christ), and the churches closed, until the guilty shall manifest signs of a true penitence which must be accompanied by the restitution to the church or monastery of everything that has been seized.
5. In case of violence done to priests, the same measures as those described in the previous article shall be adopted.
6. Orthodox brotherhoods should be organized with-

out delay in parish churches and monasteries for the protection of ecclesiastical and monastic property.

7. It shall become the duty of the parochial and monastic clergy to exhort the people, in their sermons in the church, to penitence and prayer, giving the explanation of the current events from the Christian point of view.[12]

Aside from adopting these official instructions regarding the treatment of the governmental decree, various members of the Sobor delivered strong condemnatory speeches against the new régime in general, in which bolshevism was dubbed "satanic" and "antichristian," and the officials "the servants of antichrist," etc. One orator sorrowfully lamented: "We overthrew the tsar and subjected ourselves to Jews!" And another went a step further, exclaiming: "The sole means of salvation for the Russian nation is a wise Orthodox Russian tsar!"[13]

That these various instructions regarding the treatment to be meted to the governmental officials who came to take over the property of the church in accordance with the decree were not merely theoretical, but were quite generally followed, is witnessed by the various uprisings and riots of the people who mobbed the officials and soldiers detailed for such duty. The *Acts of the Sobor* contain detailed reports of such occurrences, which give evidence that the disturbance sometimes attained formidable proportions, as when several hundred thousand marched through the streets of Petrograd in a procession—forbidden by the authorities—remonstrating against the measures of the government. Such open defiance of the authorities on the

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 149; from the official *Acts of the Sobor.*
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

part of the people heartened and encouraged the church to believe that it might rely upon the common people for support in its policy of opposition, and led it to persevere. The government, on the other hand, just for that very reason came to realize the dangerous potentialities of the situation, and resolved to break the power of its ecclesiastical foe by every possible means.

It is easy to imagine in what a mood the Sobor was likely to receive the publication of the decree of January 23. The particular section whose duty it was to bring in a report concerning the matter presented its recommendations, which were read by Prince Eugene Trubetskoy. The report, in part, reads as follows:

The individuals wielding the governmental authority audaciously attempt to destroy the very existence of the Orthodox church. In order to realize this satanic design, the Soviet of People's Commissioners published the decree concerning the separation of the church from the state, which legalized an open persecution not only of the Orthodox church, but of all other religious communions, Christian or non-Christian. Not despising deceit, the enemies of Christ fraudulently put on the appearance of granting by it religious liberty.

Welcoming all real extension of liberty of conscience, the Sobor at the same time points out that by the provisions of the said decree freedom of the Orthodox church, as well as of all other religious organizations and communions in general, is rendered void. Under the pretense of "the separation of the church from the state," the Soviet of People's Commissioners attempts to render impossible the very existence of the churches, the ecclesiastical institutions, and the clergy.

Under the guise of taking over the ecclesiastical property, the said decree aims to destroy the very

possibility of divine worship and ministration. It declares that "no ecclesiastical or religious association has the right to possess property," and "all property of the existing ecclesiastical and religious associations in Russia is declared to be national wealth." Thereby the Orthodox churches and monasteries, those resting-places of the relics of the saints revered by all Orthodox people, become the common property of all citizens irrespective of their creedal differences—of Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and pagans, and the holy objects designated for the divine service, *i.e.* the holy cross, the holy gospel, the sacred vessels, the holy miracle-working icons, are at the disposal of the governmental authorities, which may either permit or not (as they wish) their use by the parishes.

Let the Russian people understand that they (the authorities) wish to deprive them of God's churches with their sacred objects! As soon as all property of the church is taken away, it is not possible to offer any aid to it, for in accordance with the intention of the decree everything donated shall be taken away. The support of monasteries, churches, and the clergy alike becomes impossible.

But that is not all: in consequence of the confiscation of the printing establishments, it is impossible for the church independently to publish the holy gospel as well as all other sacred and liturgical books in their wonted purity and authenticity.

In the same manner, the decree affects the pastors of the church. Declaring that "no one may refuse to perform his civil duties on account of his religious views," it thereby constrains them to fulfill military obligations, forbidden them by the 83d rule of the holy Apostles. At the same time, ministers of the altar are removed from educating the people. The very teaching of the law of God, not only in governmental, but even in private schools, is not permitted; likewise all

theological institutions are doomed to be closed. The church is thus excluded from the possibility of educating its own pastors.

Declaring that "the governmental functions or those of other publico-juridical institutions shall not be accompanied by any religious rites or ceremonies," the decree thereby sacrilegiously sunders all connections of the government with the sanctities of faith.

On the basis of all the above-mentioned considerations, the holy Sobor declares:

1. The decree published by the Soviet of People's Commissioners regarding the separation of the church from the state represents in itself, under the guise of a law declaring liberty of conscience, an inimical attempt upon the life of the Orthodox church, and is an act of open persecution.

2. All participation, either in the publication of the law so injurious to the church, or in attempts to put it into practice, is not reconcilable with membership in the Orthodox church, and subjects all transgressors belonging to the Orthodox communion to the heaviest penalties, to the extent of excommunicating them from the church (in accordance with 73d rule of the holy Apostles, and the 13th rule of the Seventh Ecumenical Council).[14]

This recommendation was then adopted by the Sobor and became the official answer of the Russian church to the January decree. The church was determined to oppose the decree, or at least to disregard it whenever possible. For the church, the law was not valid; its provisions were regarded as persecution, and the church pronounced its anathema upon all who should attempt to put them into practice. The die was cast: again the situation clearly spelled warfare

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 177-179.

between the two forces. Would the government be forced to go to Canossa? Or would the church be cowed into submission? To settle questions like these all too often blood needs be spilled.

After adopting the resolution, the Sobor on the same day appointed a committee to draw up a more popular appeal to the rank and file of the church masses; this document in stirring terms called upon the masses to defend the endangered church against the attacks of the government:

Orthodox Christians! Things unheard of for ages are happening in our holy Russia!

Persons now wielding authority and calling themselves People's Commissioners, themselves strangers to the Christian faith, and some of them to every other faith, have published a decree (law), which they entitled *Regarding the Freedom of Conscience,* but which in fact represents a complete violation of the conscience of the believers.

In accordance with that law, if it should be enforced, as in places it is actually being put into practice, all God's churches with their sacred objects and possessions may be taken away from us, the trimmings from the miracle-working icons shall be wrenched off, the sacred vessels shall be minted into money or otherwise disposed of as it pleases the authorities, the church bells shall grow mute. The holy sacraments shall no longer be administered, the dead shall be buried without the rites of church chanting, as was actually done in Moscow and Petrograd, and they shall bury in Orthodox cemeteries whomever they please. Was there ever a time, since the conversion of Russia, like this? Never! Even the Tartars had more reverence for our holy faith than our present lawgivers! Until now Russia was called holy, but now they want to

make it pagan. Who has ever heard that church affairs should be decided by atheists who are not even Russians or Orthodox? By an order, signed by a non-Orthodox woman, the holy Alexandro-Nevsky Monastery in Petrograd was attacked, like an enemy camp, by an armed band, which conducted itself in an unheard of manner, and even murdered a priest (Father Peter Skipetrov) who wished to bring to reason the raving people. And they would have altogether succeeded in seizing the sanctuary, had not the common people protected it (although they were unarmed) merely with their breasts, their outcries, and their laments.

Rally, Orthodox people, round your churches and pastors; unite yourselves, men and women, old and young, and form associations for the defense of our inherited sanctuaries! Those sanctuaries are your possessions. Your pious ancestors, as well as yourselves, have built and beautified God's churches, and have dedicated these possessions to God. The priests in the churches are only their spiritual guardians, to whom these sanctuaries were entrusted for safekeeping. But the time has come when even you, Orthodox people, must become their indefatigable guardians and defenders, for the governmental authorities desire to take away from you this God's property without even consulting you as to your views regarding it. Guard and defend God's churches, heirlooms of many centuries, the most beautiful ornaments of the Russian land; do not permit them to pass into the insolent and unclean hands of the unbelievers; do not permit such a horrible sacrilege and desecration to come to pass!

If that were to happen, then indeed Russia, the holy and Orthodox, would be turned into the land of the antichrist; a spiritual desert, wherein death would be preferable to life. Loudly declare to all who have for-

gotten God and conscience, and manifest in deeds as well, that you have heeded the voice of your spiritual Father and leader, the most holy patriarch Tikhon!

In a special proclamation he exhorts you to follow him, to brave sufferings in the defense of the sanctuaries, obeying the voice of the apostle: "It is granted you even to suffer on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him." (Phil. i. 29.) It is better to shed one's blood to become worthy of the martyr's wreath, than to permit the Orthodox faith to be insulted by its enemies![15]

The warlike, defiant, and at the same time apprehensive mood of the Sobor may be judged from the fact that in the same session the motion was made that the patriarch should forestall all possible emergencies by appointing a substitute in his place, in case he himself should be arrested or otherwise incapacitated for the discharge of his office. The suggestion was approved, and the Sobor carried this recommendation to Tikhon, in spite of the patriarch's unreadiness to act on the suggestion when it had been previously presented to him privately. Later, the central organization of the Moscow parochial brotherhoods appointed twenty-four of their members to serve as the patriarch's bodyguard. They served in two shifts, each consisting of twelve men, and were instructed to accompany the patriarch on all his journeys, and to be ever present with him; if any danger were to threaten him, they were to arouse the masses instantly.

Moreover, when the newly decreed laws concerning civil marriage and divorce came to be discussed, the debate resulted in another clean-cut defiance of the

[15] Published in *Church News,* Nos. 3-4, 1918; quoted in full in Vvedensky, *op. cit.,* pp. 192-93.

government on the issue of obedience to the laws. The Sobor finally defined its position by declaring that marriage solemnized by the rites of the church could not be annulled by means of a divorce granted by the civil courts; that such divorces were not recognized by the church as actual, and the whole procedure, from the church's point of view, impugned the sacrament of marriage; individuals thus divorced, who would marry again, were regarded by the church as having committed adultery, a major sin punishable by deprivation of the sacraments; mere registry of marriages by the governmental authorities could not be a substitute for the church's solemnization of marriage, which is a sacrament. Thus, for the Orthodox, the ecclesiastical marriage ceremony was indispensable. As for the surrender of the recording books and registers of marriages, the patriarch gave permission that the authorities be allowed to make copies of single entries or the entire contents, but forbade the surrender of the books proper. Thus they remained in the keeping of the church, despite the January decree.

From mere declarations, the church passed over to deeds and to active mobilization of its forces in defense of its annulled prerogatives. The methods pursued were those of organizing parochial brotherhoods, in which, in the course of time, many of the former monarchist and conservative leaders soon found ample scope for their energies, so that the church became the place of refuge for such individuals. Thus, for instance, the Moscow Council of Parochial Brotherhoods elected for its president the former ober-procuror of the Holy Synod, A. D. Samarin. According to the Instructions of February 28, sent out conjointly by the patriarch

and the Sobor, these organizations need not call themselves ecclesiastical, in order to avoid the provisions of the January decree against such societies, for by non-profession of their essentially ecclesiastical character they sought to retain their juridical rights. In cases of necessity, they were instructed to take over the property of the local church, thus preventing its being seized by the authorities.[16]

The paragraphs of the Instructions of February 28, giving directions concerning cases of confiscation of church property, are especially revealing, and may, therefore, well be given in full:

The sacred vessels and other requisites for divine service must be guarded in all possible ways against degradation and alienation, and therefore should not be unnecessarily taken out of their lockers in churches, and should be protected in such a manner that they may not easily be found.

In case an attempt should be made to seize the sacred vessels or other requisites for divine worship, the church recording books and other property of the church, they are not to be surrendered voluntarily, because (a) the sacred vessels and requisites for divine worship are sanctified for ecclesiastical use and no layman may even touch them; (b) the recording books are indispensable for purely ecclesiastical purposes; if the secular authorities need them, they must themselves take the trouble to establish them; (c) ecclesiastical property belongs to the holy church, and the clergy and the entire Orthodox population are merely its guardians.

In cases of attack of plunderers and robbers upon ecclesiastical possessions, the Orthodox people should be aroused for the defense of the church by the ring-

[16] Cf. the official document, given in full in Vvedensky, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

ing of bells, or sending out of messengers, or by other such means.[17]

Punishment for acts such as were forbidden by the ecclesiastical authorities did not stop short of excommunication of those guilty of disregard of the ecclesiastical regulations.

Besides these means, the church authorities sought to organize opposition to the state authorities by demonstrations manifested in numerous processions, which amounted to public protest meetings. Parents and parochial school authorities were also organized into parent-teachers' associations, in order to exert their united pressure upon the state officials in the matter of retaining catechetical instruction in schools and keeping the parochial schools themselves in the hands of the church. In fact, these associations even antedated the January decree. The central committee of these organizations issued a resolution on the very day of the publication of the January decree, by which they declared the prohibition to teach religion in schools "an open violation of the principle of autonomy of the Russian school . . . and a negation of any real freedom of conscience," for such a freedom would give parents the right to decide whether or not their children should receive religious instruction. Furthermore, on February 11, the Sobor's section on religious instruction, together with the parent-teachers' organizations, held a meeting at which a resolution was passed asserting that the parties to the contract should under no circumstances permit the exclusion of the catechism from the curriculum of the schools.

It was by such forms of activity, as well as by haranguing public meetings, publication of pamphlets and

[17] The full document in Vvedensky, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5.

booklets, and similar means that the church attempted to arouse public opinion against the anti-ecclesiastical measures of the government, and thus sought to compel a modification or abrogation of these measures.

From the capitals, the organized opposition to the measures adopted by the government spread throughout the provinces, and led to many, in some instances serious, conflicts with the armed forces of the government. In Samara, the local soviet brought the clergy before the revolutionary tribunal for obstructing the January decree; in Yaroslavl the parochial council passed a resolution not to permit any "outsiders" to alienate the church property, and refused to surrender the church registers. Attempts on the part of the authorities to put the January decree into execution led to riots, which in turn called forth the proclamation of martial law by the authorities. In Voronezh, the mob attacked the commissioner detailed to take over the local monastery, and the riot ended in his murder. In Orla, Kharkov, and Tula, the demonstrating group was fired upon, and in the last-named place thirteen persons were killed and many others wounded. In Penza, the uprising of the people became so threatening that the local soviets found it necessary to barricade themselves within their headquarters.

Similar demonstrations, protests, riots, meetings, and processions were held in almost every city in Russia, and the number of the victims of the repressive measures adopted by the authorities soon mounted up to hundreds. Thus in the Poshekhon county, the *gubernia* of Yaroslavl, upward to one hundred people were arrested, and several of them shot, while others were sentenced to other punishments. The church, in reply, proclaimed such sufferers "martyrs of the

faith" and held solemn memorial services for them, and kept their names constantly before the people as examples of spiritual heroism. In turn, these persistent outbreaks were energetically repressed by the authorities, but the situation was favorable to the committing of excesses on the part of irresponsible mobs of rowdies and other loose elements who found in it their opportunity for looting and murder. It was in such manner that the metropolitan of Kiev, Vladimir, was murdered on the night of January 25. There were, of course, arrests of hierarchs, some of whom were cruelly treated, but later were released for lack of evidence against them. There existed also, in some instances, misunderstandings in the minds of the officials regarding the proper interpretation of the January decree; some actually took it to mean an overthrow of the entire church ministration and destruction of its organization. Such misguided officials proceeded with fury to carry out their mistaken ideas, and in consequence spread havoc and destruction about them before they could be stopped by superior orders. Hence it may be freely conceded that many hideous excesses were committed, even though both sides were parties to the struggle: the church assumed a determined attitude of opposition to the new authorities and did not stop with mere words; on the other hand, the small group of revolutionary doctrinaires who had seized the supreme power in Russia were desperately in earnest to retain it, and were not loath to follow a policy of blood and iron, if such a course bade fair to further their interests.

The note issued by the patriarch on March 5, strenuously protesting against the disastrous Brest-Litovsky treaty, whereby the new masters of Russia bought

themselves a respite from the German victorious onward rush at such a fearful price, certainly was not calculated to allay the feelings which had been running so high. In his proclamation, the patriarch rejected in a categorical fashion the newly concluded treaty, stating that "the church cannot bless the concluded peace, so dangerous for Russia"; in this pronouncement Tikhon again took it upon himself to speak for Russia, a gesture which the new government, still insecure in its own hold upon the country, could not tolerate or forgive. Proclamations of this sort, dealing with matters which the authorities regarded to be of a purely political nature, tended to aggravate the situation which was already tense, and to confirm the governmental authorities in their belief that the church represented the chief counter-revolutionary force in Russia.

Besides the active measures of obstruction, or at least of passive resistance, to the January decree, the church attempted to remonstrate with the new rulers in a peaceable way against what it regarded as persecution. On March 14, a committee representing the Moscow Association of Parish Councils presented itself in the office of the Council of People's Commissioners, and in forceful language presented the grievances of the church: the decree separating the church from the state was regarded as a violation of freedom of conscience, and hence as persecution. On that account, the violent dissatisfaction of the one hundred million of Orthodox Russians was affirmed to be increasing, and nothing less than a change of the decree would appease them. A later petition sent to the People's Commissioners stated that in the view of the church the Russian government must be Orthodox, and the

petition demanded a change in at least these points: teaching of religion in schools should be permitted at least as an elective subject; the unjust deprivation of religious organizations of juridical rights must be rescinded; the nationalization of church property, and forbidding of subsidy even on the part of local autonomous groups, must likewise be changed as being an overt denial of the liberty of worship granted by the January decree. Therefore religious organizations must be given the right to retain and use all the property of which they were possessed before the decree was issued, on the ground that such property was in reality the property of the Orthodox portion of the nation, in whose interests it was used.

Could the government make any concessions? It seems quite evident that, so long as it remained faithful to its revolutionary program, the government could not alter the fundamental principles underlying the decree, namely, freedom of conscience for all, and a complete separation of the church from the state, and the school from the church. These were essentials upon which there could be no compromise. Some concession, however, could be granted regarding the method by which these principles were to be realized. But the items demanded by the church either concerned the principles—for instance, the demand that the government be Orthodox—or such items as the right to retain and use its property, which could not possibly be granted unless the entire legislation concerning the nationalization of all the rest of the private property were likewise revoked, which was unthinkable, for the peasant adherence to the Soviet's cause rested chiefly on that measure. It must be remembered that the church was not the only body which lost its

property; the entire property-owning class was dispossessed in order to carry out the Communist theories of the new masters of Russia, and to gain the support of the peasant masses. As for religious instruction in schools, the demand could not be granted, because a non-confessional government was bound to be consistent in the matter and was logically constrained to keep all religious instruction out. The only point the government could yield was that of recognizing the church as a body possessing juridical rights. But as long as the church was regarded as the most potent enemy of the new government, it was thought necessary to use all measures of precaution to cripple its potentialities for evil; and in view of the determined active obstructionist policy of the church, the state authorities were not in the mood to make concessions.

The Sobor closed the second period of its activity on April 20, when it adjourned to meet again, as was generally supposed, in the fall. But it resumed its sessions again on June 15, and this third period proved to be the last. Among the first items of business, the Sobor published a declaration "regarding the measures called forth by the persecution now fallen upon the Orthodox church." In this document, the membership was exhorted to emulate the example of the "martyrs" who had suffered for the faith, and a day was appointed (January 25) upon which a nation-wide memorial service in remembrance of the heroism and devotion of these confessors of the faith would be held; the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council was charged with the duty of collecting all extant information regarding the cases of persecution or martyrdom, and with keeping the church at large well informed about

such instances. The Sobor again reiterated its rejection of the provisions of the January decree, and ordered that "steps be taken to regain all alienated property belonging to churches, monasteries, and ecclesiastical institutions and organizations, including the buildings of theological schools and consistories." Finally, the Sobor ended by deciding

to make known by a special declaration that the most holy Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, headed by the most holy patriarch, with the most reverend hierarchs, and consisting of delegates chosen by the whole Orthodox population, including in that number peasants also, is the sole, lawful, supreme authority in all ecclesiastical matters, and the guardian of God's churches, of the sacred monasteries, and of all ecclesiastical property. No one, except the most holy Sobor and authorities appointed by it, has any right to assume ecclesiastical authority or to make disposition of ecclesiastical property; so much the less does this right belong to people who profess no Christian faith whatsoever or who openly acknowledge themselves to be disbelievers in God.[18]

The Sobor, in consequence of this attitude, went on as if it had never heard of the January decree: it discussed matters relative to theological training schools, parochial schools, landed property, church printing establishments, and candle factories as if the church still possessed the full direction of such affairs. It seemed as if, so far as the church was concerned, the new government had ceased to exist. Plainly, even he who runs may read the meaning of the church's attitude: we expect to fight on!

[18] Titlinov, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

The first six months after the publication of the January decree, many provisions of the law remained dead letter ones. To be sure, there were some items which were put into practice almost automatically, or had already been practically realized. Thus from the beginning the government never thought of permitting its official functions to be accompanied by religious rites, for such an incongruous mockery would be quite unthinkable; furthermore, to dispose of the religious symbolism and icons still remaining in public buildings was a matter requiring but a short time for accomplishment. Similar procedure was adopted regarding the annulling of the governmental subsidy to the ecclesiastical establishments, accomplished by the simple, effective expedient of striking out from the state budget the sum of thirty-three odd millions of rubles, which the Provisional Government still carried, although about an equal sum formerly provided for the support of parochial schools had already been liquidated by its Ministry of Education. This did not instantly take away all the sources of revenue at the disposal of the church, even though the subsidy formed a considerable portion of the total; but the rest of the ecclesiastical capital was likewise quickly dissipated: such sums as were deposited in banks were "nationalized," and the capital invested in bonds and stocks was liquidated by the decree invalidating such forms of capital. The church and monastic landed property was to a large extent taken from its legal owners by local soviet authorities, and the same was becoming increasingly the case in regard to such buildings, factories, institutions, and other immovable property of which the ecclesiastical authorities were possessed. Nevertheless, by the middle of 1918, the greater part

of all this type of property was still in the hands of the church.

The provisions regarding the transfer to the Soviet authorities of the registry functions of births and marriages, which were hitherto performed by the church, were more difficult of fulfillment. For one thing, the government was not prompt in establishing such bureaus of registry, and the church refused to surrender its own records. Hence for a long time the old practice continued in vogue.

It was easier to realize the provision regarding the stopping of religious instruction in public schools, because the requisite action was of a negative, rather than a positive nature. Nothing more was necessary beyond issuing an order removing this subject from the curriculum and stopping payments to the catechists. These simple expedients almost automatically accomplished the desired result. Nevertheless, in some isolated instances where the community was largely homogeneous in its composition, and unified in its demand, or in cases where parochial schools had not yet been taken over by the government, the catechetical instruction persisted.

This state of affairs, however, was terminated soon after the Fifth Convention of the Soviets, held in July, 1918, which became the Constituent Assembly of the October Revolution. This convention adopted the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Republic, the thirteenth article of which reiterated the fundamental provision of the January decree, stating: "In order to guarantee to the workers an actual freedom of conscience, the church is separated from the government, and the school from the church, and the liberty of religious as well as anti-religious propaganda is

granted to all citizens.'"[19] Following this important constitutional declaration, the People's Commissariat of Justice, on August 24, issued Instructions, which form the most important interpretation of, as well as supplement to, the January decree. In the first place, the Instructions specified that the January decree comprises all religious communions or confessions: the Orthodox, the Old Ritualists, the Catholic of all rites, the Armenian-Gregorian, the Protestant, as well as the Mohammedan, Buddhist, and Lamaic confessions. Moreover, all other religious associations organized for any type of worship, as well as such organizations as are composed of members of one particular confession for the purpose of carrying on any benevolent or educational work or similar objects, are all comprised in the decree separating the church from the government, and are not eligible for aid or subsidy, and lose their juridical rights.[20] It will be noticed that the latter provision was directed against the brotherhoods organized in connection with parishes and monasteries mainly for the purpose of holding the church property in case attempts for its confiscation were made. Sometimes these organizations bore other names than such as would legally make them church societies; hence the provision of the Instructions.

The provisions of the January decree regarding the transfer of the churches to the governmental authorities were elaborated in the Instructions by further detailed pronouncements. The property held by the church at the time when the decree was issued was to be taken over by the local Soviets of Workers and

[19] Gidulyanov: *Separation of the Church from the Government*, p. 29.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Peasants; the local authorities were then directed to make an inventory of such property, comprising all articles used in worship or ritual, and with this inventory they were to turn the entire establishment over to the representatives of the group of believers which had applied for the use of it, from which time the congregation had a free possession of the premises. The number of local inhabitants required to obtain the use of church buildings and equipment was fixed at not less than twenty.

After the formalities of transfer of this property into the custody of the group were complied with, the group then obligated itself to protect it as a trust of national property, to keep everything in good repair, and restore, at its own expense, anything lost or worn out; to pay the operating and running expenses, such as heating, insurance, and local taxes, to use the equipment solely for the purposes of worship; to keep an inventory of all newly acquired property (by bequest or transfer from another church) such as did not belong to any individual, and to permit an official inspection of the establishment during hours when the services were not in progress. In case these conditions were not strictly observed, the property immediately reverted to the local soviets.

In the sample contract published along with the Instructions, it was furthermore specified that groups taking over church property for purposes of worship obligated themselves not to permit political meetings hostile to the government to be held in it, or speeches by any individual of such tendencies, or the delivery of sermons directed against the established régime, the selling of anti-governmental literature, or ringing of alarm bells for the purpose of

arousing the population and inciting it against the government. "In the event of failure to adopt all measures in our power to fulfill all our obligations under this Agreement, we shall be criminally liable and shall be treated with all the severity of the revolutionary law: and in such contingencies the Soviet of Workmen-Peasant Deputies shall have the right to cancel this Agreement." Of course, any member of the group had the right to withdraw at will, provided he gave proper notice of his intention. But likewise anyone who wished to join the group had the right to sign the contract.

In case there should not be found the required minimum number of believers to apply for a church building, the fact must be published in the newspapers, and a week after the appearance of the third such notice, it must be reported to the People's Commissariat of Education, which would then make a disposition of the case. The equipment of the church would either be transferred to another church, or would be stored in a special storage provided for that purpose.

All other property whatever, from which the church drew revenue, such as houses not used for worship, land, factories, candle manufactories, industrial plants, cash capital, and all other property which had not been sequestrated hitherto, was ordered immediately to be seized. For non-delivery of any such capital, the guilty individuals were subject to the provisions of the criminal law. The term set for the surrender of all property was two months from the day of publication of the Instructions.

Regarding the surrender of the registry books, the Instructions ruled that all such records kept by any

communion or church must be surrendered to the governmental authorities without delay. The clergy were granted the right to copy anything needed out of the books, but only after the originals had been surrendered.

Religious processions, or performances of any religious ceremony in public, were permitted only after the application for the holding of such public meetings had been approved by the local authorities. It was furthermore specified that all monuments or tablets found in churches, commemorating the glories of the former tsarist régime, must be removed as "insulting the revolutionary sensibilities of the working masses."

Finally, the Instructions amplified the provisions of the January decree regarding the teaching of the catechism by further details as follows:

In view of the separation of the school from the church, instruction in any religious creed must in no case be admitted in any state, public, or private educational institution, with the exception of purely theological establishments.

All credits voted for religious instruction in schools shall be immediately stopped, and teachers of religion shall be deprived of maintenance.

No state or other publico-juridical institution shall have the right to issue any money to instructors of religion either for the present time or due them since the month of January, 1918.

The buildings of theological educational establishments of all confessions, as well as of the parochial schools, shall be turned over, as national property, to the local Soviet of Workmen-Peasant Deputies, or the People's Commissariat of Education.

Note: The Soviets of Workmen-Peasant Deputies may lease or grant such buildings for the purpose of

establishing in them special training establishments of any religious creed, on the general conditions applicable to all citizens, and with the knowledge of the People's Commissariat of Education.[21]

Shortly after the publication of this supplementary legislation regarding the concrete methods of realization of the January decree, the Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, which had been in session since August 15, 1917, was dissolved "on account of lack of funds," without completing its work. It was implied in some of the legislation that the next Sobor was to be held within three years, *i.e.* in 1921, but this was not specifically and formally decreed. In the meantime, the patriarch with his two auxiliary governing bodies was left to face the increasingly difficult situation alone.

[21] This important document was published in the *Izvestiya* of Aug. 30, and is dated Aug. 24, 1918; cf. the full text in Gidulyanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 622-23.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOVIET ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATION

The initial fundamental legislation was followed, in the course of time, by a mass of supplementary and additional edicts and amendments which adjusted the Soviet legislation to the needs of the emerging problems. The details of this mass are of a complicated nature, and no attempt can be made in a work of this character to present them fully. But an acquaintance with the general outline of the subject is absolutely necessary for a proper understanding of the situation with which the church was dealing, and with the temper which animated the government. Disregarding the fact that chronologically some of this matter is ahead of the period reached by the rest of the story, an attempt will be made to present a review of the legislation up to date.

Both the January decree and the Constitution definitely and explicitly granted freedom of conscience, worship, and propaganda of religious as well as atheistic creeds. Later pronouncements amplified this provision in points which needed further elucidation. Church services, as well as sermons, could be freely held in stated places of worship without any previous censorship, provided they were of an exclusively religious character.[1] The same applied to prayer

[1] Instruction of the S. C. E. C., June 13, 1921.

meetings, as well as other meetings of a religious character held in private homes.

Like the French Law of Separation of 1905, which ordered the creation of *associationes cultuelles* to which alone the state was willing to entrust the free use of church buildings, the Soviet authorities, possibly in conscious imitation of the French model, also refused to deal with the hierarchy of the Russian church, for the latter had been deprived of its juridical character, and stipulated that the only legal trustees it would acknowledge were lay representatives of the local groups of believers. Their number was fixed at twenty. In localities where there were less than twenty to apply for the use of the church, and even where there were twenty or more but where no church building existed, the groups which existed, whatever their number, could meet for religious services in private homes, but were obliged to report the place and time of every such meeting to the local authorities. In case at least twenty applied for the use of the church in any given locality where one existed, after complying with the requisite regulations, the congregation could use such a church for its religious services at any time without previously reporting them to the authorities. When any of the original signatories died or moved away, the full quota was maintained by recruiting the necessary quorum of members from among the rest of the congregation. The above-named conditions regarding the different kinds of religious organizations were finally defined by assigning a different legal terminology to them: a "group of believers" denoted an organization comprising at least twenty trustees and any number of other members, which by complying with the terms of the governmental contract for a free use

of church buildings, conducted its services in a church of their locality thus assigned them; a "religious society" was defined in 1924 to consist of no less than fifty members, and must possess a constitution approved by the government; it need not, in such case, meet in a stated church building, but might hold its services in private homes, without being obliged to report each separate meeting to the authorities.[2]

The conditions of the contract into which each congregation had to enter before the government would entrust it the church building and its equipment were specified by the People's Commissariat of Justice. These have already been described in the previous chapter, and hence need not be repeated here.

This legislation, which threw the power into the hands of laymen, had important consequences in the democratization of the parish organizations. The trustees called and dismissed the priest, who was elected by the congregation, while the episcopate was restricted to a mere approval and installation of the priest-elect in the parish which called him. Practically, the episcopate found it advisable to comply with the wish of the congregation in the majority of instances. But the system was attended with the besetting evils of all "democratic" organizations, in so far that the priest held his post at the will of the congregation, and was therefore reduced to the necessity of gaining the favor of his people; and a zealous discharge of official duties is not always the chief means to that end, as many an American minister well knows. He was likewise to a considerable extent dependent upon the congregation for the general policy of the conduct of church

[2] Decision of the fifth section of the People's Commissariat of Justice, July 28, 1924.

affairs. Thus, for instance, during the period of the rise of the *Living Church,* many priests found themselves ousted by their parochial councils for sympathizing with the movement, for it lay predominantly in the hands of the lay trustees to determine whether the congregation should throw its lot with the new "reforming" movement, or remain loyal to the patriarchal party.

But, on the same ground, the trustees of the congregation alone were responsible to the governmental authorities for the conduct of church affairs, while the priest serving the charge was not required to be registered, for the government would hold the group rather than the priest responsible for any occurrence regarded by it as of a hostile or detrimental character.[3]

It should further be added in treating the subject that churches of historical, artistic, or archeological value were transferred to the care of the Museum section of the Commissariat of Education, and turned into public museums. In case no one cared to apply for the use of a local church (as actually happened in cases where the church at the time was in serious disrepair, and the congregation knew it would be expected to put it in order at its own expense), or the required quota of trustees could not be reached, the Commissariat of Education was free to secularize such buildings for any other purpose deemed needful. Furthermore, any new churches that might be erected since the promulgation of the decree were likewise subject to the provisions here described, and were not acknowledged as the property of the congregation which built them, *i.e.* it was specified that such

[3] Fifth section of the People's Commissariat of Justice, No. 21973, Aug. 16, 1924.

churches were let out for use only, while the title was vested in the government. The prohibition against the use of churches without governmental permission extended even to domestic chapels, such as jail, hospital, and almshouse chapels.

As far as the working of these laws regarding the use of church edifices is concerned, an idea of it may be gained from the situation at present obtaining in Moscow. Out of more than four hundred and sixty large Orthodox churches (not counting the chapels attached to private houses or benevolent institutions) a great majority are used for purposes of worship. A small number, for which the requisite number of petitioners had not applied, and all house chapels, were closed. Some of these abandoned buildings were taken over by the municipality to serve other purposes, such as clubs, moving-picture theaters, etc. Some of the most famous cathedrals, as for instance those ancient sanctuaries found within the enclosure of the Kremlin, the official seat of the Soviet government, such as the Uspensky and Arkhangelsky cathedrals, were turned into national museums, although on occasion special services may be held in them. It may be of interest to remark that the government undertook a very thorough and extensive restoration of the interior of these historically famous shrines, the burial places of the Russian tsars, and by wiping off the surface layer of mural paintings, original frescoes of remarkable workmanship were restored. Hence these historically important memorials of former Russian culture were thus preserved for future generations by the care of the Soviet government. That weirdly grotesque edifice on the Red Square, "the dream of a diseased imagination," as it was called, the Cathedral of Basil the Blessed, is like-

wise undergoing very extensive exterior and interior repairs, and has been turned exclusively into a national historical museum. The most beautiful cathedral in Moscow, the Church of Christ the Savior, is used for regular church services, although on week-days it is open to the general public upon payment of a small admission fee.

The second important legislative enactment of the January decree separated the school from the church, but did not specify, at that time, the exact conditions under which religious instruction of children or adults could be legally imparted. The amplification of this provision was issued in 1922,[4] and specified:

Instruction in matters of faith of persons who have not reached their eighteenth year of age is not permitted. Persons above eighteen years of age may be instructed in special theological courses with the aim of preparing them for the priesthood, but on the condition that the curriculum of such courses be limited to specifically theological subjects. It is likewise permitted to hold separate lectures, discussions, or reading courses dealing with confessional matters for persons above eighteen years of age, provided that such meetings do not acquire the character of a systematic scholastic method of instruction.

The growing generation must be kept from receiving a systematic religious training. The intent of this legislation seems fairly clear; the younger generation must grow up without a definite, organized, religious instruction, and as far as possible shall receive a secular training which, if it is not formally anti-religious, in the sense that specific courses in atheism are not offered, yet is in a large number of cases and

[4] Ruling of the A. C. E. C., June 13, 1922.

to a large extent motivated by anti-religious purposes, and is at all events non-religious. Besides, the Communist Party, as well as other definitely atheistic organizations, are free to instruct the youth in definitely and systematically organized manner in the tenets and dogmas of atheism. There can be no doubt that this provision is the most unfair enactment of the entire range of religious regulations of the Soviet legislation, and is enormously harmful in its results and working. This single provision, considered apart from all other measures calculated to multiply the ranks of the atheistic organizations, and correspondingly to nullify and obviate the influence of the church, must be regarded as the most pernicious, as well as the most efficient and effective, means of gradually substituting the anti-religious point of view among the great masses of the Russian people for the religious one now prevailing. Without doubt, there are elements of superstition and magic in the religious concepts of the Russian masses, and those elements ought to be swept away; if the provisions of the governmental educational system accomplish an improvement along this line, they will do a praiseworthy piece of work. But the provisions forbid all specifically religious instruction under conditions of regularly organized classwork, and to that extent they nullify the loudly proclaimed principle of freedom of religious belief and propaganda.

It should not be omitted, however, that the prohibition of religious instruction of children and youth under eighteen years of age is not absolute. Later legislation specified that children in groups of three or less, whether they belong to the same family or not, may receive religious instruction either by their parents

or by another person, and this instruction may be given either in the home of the children or of the teacher. It cannot, however, be given in schools or in church buildings. The teachers need not be registered with the governmental authorities, for the instruction is unofficial, and is treated as a part of the activity of the congregation.[5]

There seems to be a strict uniformity in the application of this principle to all religious communities, and its strict observance forms probably the harshest and the most galling enactment laid upon them. It is rumored rather widely that the sectarians, in many instances, do not suffer any great curtailment of their work of religious education of the young, in spite of the law. In other words, the law is being "administered." That may very well be true, for much of the ecclesiastical legislation was expressly designed to break the power of the dominant Orthodox church, while the attitude of the government toward the formerly oppressed sectarian communions, especially toward those which profess the tenets of Communism, may be regarded as distinctly less hostile, and in the latter case even to a certain extent friendly; the administration of the law, of course, is in the hands of the local authorities, and as everywhere else, there is always room for a certain amount of favoritism. But against this may be urged the positive official pronouncement in the case of catechetical instruction required (by custom) in the Lutheran churches, of all young people in preparation for joining the church by confirmation; when a certain particular case of this type was appealed for official adjudication, it was

[5] Instruction of the fifth section of the Commissariat of Justice, Sept. 14, 1924.

decided that Lutherans have the right to catechize their children privately, in groups of three or less, but not under auspices which would resemble organized school instruction.[6] It may furthermore be mentioned in this connection that the age limit of eighteen years has been lowered, in the case of the Mohammedans, to sixteen years; this provision is officially defended on the ground that the Mohammedans, comprising predominantly Asiatic peoples, regard manhood to have been reached at the age of sixteen, rather than at eighteen, as is the case with the slower-maturing white race. It is thus claimed that in principle no injustice has been done to the Russian youth by lowering the age limit of the Mohammedans.

In an interview with Smidovich, in charge of the department of ecclesiastical affairs, I raised the question of the apparent injustice of granting the anti-religious organizations freedom of systematic instruction and propaganda of their dogmas, but denying the same right to the religious bodies. His answer was interesting: he denied that to be the case, and pointed out that each religious service held in churches on Sunday and other holy days is to be regarded as possessing the value of religious instruction, and since children and youth under eighteen have a free access to these services, they were to be considered as receiving religious instruction. This is, to be sure, a palpable evasion of the real problem; nevertheless, there is a certain amount of truth in it, which, as far as it appears, has been hitherto almost totally neglected by the churches. The ordinary liturgical service cannot be said to contain much in the nature of religious in-

[6] Fifth section of the People's Commissariat of Justice, Sept. 29, 1924; quoted in Gidulyanov, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

struction, in the narrower sense of that word, and it is greatly to be desired that the services be made contributory toward that end; but this devout desire and well-meant advice has but little chance of succeeding in the face of the intense conservatism of the church and the rigidity of form so tenaciously upheld; on the whole, it would be inexcusably optimistic to expect any extensive changes to be introduced into the services. Smidovich, of course, may well be presumed to be as conversant with the fact of a rather doubtful value of an ordinary church service in the matter of actual "religious instruction" of the young as any one else.

Regarding the problem of educating the candidates for priesthood, it must be recalled that all schools, even the specifically and professionally theological, had been "nationalized" as early as December, 1917, so that the church was deprived of the very possibility of carrying on the work. Furthermore, the religious presses of the country were likewise "nationalized," so that the church very soon felt an acute lack of literature of all kinds. It is difficult to imagine the disorganization necessarily brought about by this circumstance. At first, nothing could be done to remedy the situation, although the church soon experienced a great lack of young priests. The government finally settled the problem in the following manner:

As to the question of opening theological courses, the fifth section of the People's Commissariat of Justice deems it necessary, in order to prevent all possible misuse of it, to allow organization of theological courses only in large cities, and only with the permission of the *Gubernial* Executive Committee and the consent of the People's Commissariat of Education, and the depart-

ment of cults of the People's Commissariat of Justice. Only persons who have reached their eighteenth year of age may be admitted to these courses. As the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, the eparchial ecclesiastical administrations, and the groups of believers and religious societies are deprived of their juridical rights, the establishment of theological courses may be undertaken only by private citizens of good legal standing, or a group of them; but these persons must, when applying for the permission to inaugurate the courses, present a program or plan of instruction, and the conditions under which the courses shall be given, as well as the list of instructors.

The rules about organizing theological or religious courses govern all cults and religious societies existing in the R. S. F. S. R.[7]

This is another example of unjust Soviet legislation, which on the one hand had proclaimed religion to be a private affair, and had severed all connection of the church with the state, and on the other passes such irksome, restraining limitations under which these supposedly free private opinions may be propagated. As the result of this action, the vast Russian Orthodox communion possesses at the present time only two comparatively weak theological academies, and both of them are controlled by the synodical party, while the patriarchal party, comprising some two-thirds of the entire communion (some sixty millions), has no theological training school at all! And this is the ninth year of such a state of affairs!

The limitations of the civil status of the clergy and the monks are likewise considerable, and often of a

[7] Fifth section of the People's Commissariat of Justice, May 2, 1923, No. 280.

serious nature. In the first place, the Constitution of the R. S. F. S. R. specifies that: "among those who do not elect and cannot be elected are: . . . monks and spiritual ministers of religious cults of all confessions and denominations, for whom that employment is a profession."[8] In accordance with a later definition,[9] a minister of a religious cult is a person who is a member of the parish clergy and performs religious rites, as for instance, bishops, priests, deacons, rabbis, mullahs, etc. Those individuals who receive their income from some ecclesiastical employment, but do not perform religious rites, such as psalm-singers, cantors, kosher butchers, and members of the choir, are not included in this category. Wives of professional ministers of religion are not deprived of their political rights.

The reason for this discrimination is explained to rest upon the view held by the Communists regarding the very nature of citizenship: in bourgeois countries, it may be contingent upon financial or educational qualifications; in Russia, it rests upon the character of the work in which the particular individual is engaged. He is classified as engaged either in "productive" or "non-productive" work; the latter category, as parasitic, includes "the servitors of cults," and they are consequently deprived of the franchise.

Persons engaged in part-time work of some ecclesiastical nature may be employed in certain governmental departments, exclusive of the People's Commissariats of Education, Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, and

[8] *Izvestiya,* May 26, 1925; quoted in Gidulyanov, *op. cit.,* p. 282.
[9] Circular, People's Commissariat of Finance, No. 686, art. 6, Feb. 26, 1924; quoted in Gidulyanov, *op. cit.,* p. 288.

some departments of the Commissariat of the Interior, the Workers-Peasant Inspection, although they may not be appointed to categories of work higher than the sixteenth (seventeenth is the highest). Of course, their duties connected with the church service must be performed exclusively outside of the working hours.[10]

Besides this, in accordance with the order of the People's Commissariat of Education,[11] clergy of all ranks and confessions are excluded from holding any positions in schools. Persons who formerly belonged to the clerical profession, but have given up their orders, are permitted to fill such positions after securing a special permission from the Commissariat for that purpose.

Clergy of all ranks are excluded from all coöperative societies, but are granted land on the same general basis upon which it is distributed to others. But in case the same piece of land is petitioned for by a clergyman and a workingman, preference is given to the latter. Widows and orphans of priests are not discriminated against in regard to receiving pensions.

As for "the days of rest," the Soviet government proclaimed as legal May first, the New Year, the Day of the First Revolution (January 9, 1905), the Day of the Paris Commune, the Day of the Overthrow of the Tsarist Monarchy, and the Day of the October Revolution, as well as a few others; beyond that, the days of rest were left for the decision of local authorities and unions, but it was specified that a period of rest must occur once a week, and may fall either on Sunday or

[10] Instruction of the Commissariats of Justice and of the Interior, June 19, 1923, section 14.

[11] *Revolution and the Church,* No. 2, p. 40.

any other day of the week, in accordance with the nationalist or religious predilections of the particular community for which the regulation was made.[12] Besides, the great Orthodox holidays were also permitted to be celebrated, and their dates were officially specified.

The treatment of the pacifists was considerate, to say the least. An individual who from religious principle and conviction could not serve in the army in the usual capacity of trained man-killer was permitted, after his case was adjudicated by the People's Court, to exchange that type of service for sanitary or hospital duty, or any other kind of service chosen by the person concerned. But he must prove the sincerity of his conviction by producing a record of his membership in a religious body of known pacifist profession, and must submit other proofs of his assertions as desired by the court.[13]

Finally, it must be mentioned that the legislation which has been so meagerly presented here was drawn exclusively from the code operative in the Russian Socialistic Federated Soviet Republic, but that each of the separate units which form the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics has passed legislation of its own governing all these various subjects. No attention has been paid to these other units in the present review, for each subject would have to be treated under the heading of the Union, of the Russian Republic, as well as that of the Ukrainian, White Russian, Transcaucasian, and other units. But since the legislation is essentially identical, it was not deemed expedient to go into the amount of detail necessary to point out the

[12] Gidulyanov: *op. cit.*, p. 58; Code of Work, 1922, No. 70.
[13] Decree of the C. P. S., Dec. 14, 1920; quoted in Gidulyanov, p. 378.

rest. It is well, however, to bear in mind that the legislation presented is, from the legal point of view, actually operative only in one unit of the Union, and although the rest of them are governed by similar provisions, an exhaustive treatment would have to take account of the differences wherever they exist.

CHAPTER VII

THE FAMINE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The state of civil warfare to which the mutual relations of the church and the state were comparable reached a stage of desperate crisis when, to the devastations caused by the civil wars, was added the terrible natural calamity of famine which afflicted that unhappy land in 1921. In the summer of that year, the Volga region, and to a lesser degree other regions, were affected by a terrible and widespread drought, which brought famine in its wake. The calamity was also brought partly by artificial causes connected with the peasants' resentment of the communistic methods applied by the government to the rural population, *i.e.* the confiscation of all their crops with the exception of the amount needed for their families, which naturally resulted in the peasants' retaliating by not sowing any more than was strictly needed for themselves. But in addition to this, in 1921, a terrible drought, such as had not been experienced for many decades, afflicted the region and destroyed even the little that was sown. Ultimately, the famine affected twenty-three *gubernias,* with a population of over thirty-seven million, of whom almost five million died; this staggering disaster for the time being required all the energies of the government, as well as of the various professional and private societies, and stirred the sympathies of the entire civilized world. America sent its Relief Expedition and its Y. M. C. A.; the Quakers

helped a great deal; and many European organizations, like that of Dr. Nansen, the Swedish and the German Red Cross, the Amsterdam Professional Unions, etc., took part in the work. This aid ameliorated the horrible suffering of the people of the stricken regions, but did not entirely relieve it, for all this combined effort proved to be insufficient. The relief organizations finally frankly restricted themselves to the feeding of children, for their supplies were insufficient to include the grown people. These were left to die, the total number of people who died of starvation having reached almost five million. The extent of the calamity was so overwhelming that for the time being the need of aid to the starving was uppermost in the minds of all.

The church was likewise roused to act the good Samaritan. As early as the month of August, 1921, the patriarch issued an appeal for help for the starving, addressed to the Eastern Orthodox patriarchs and autocephalous churches, to the pope of Rome, to the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of New York. As for the Russian church itself, an all-Russian church committee was organized for the purpose of aiding the starving, and collections of money and provisions were gathered in churches and by the parochial brotherhoods. The money thus collected was to be expended through the administrative channels of the church for the relief of the starving masses. How far the church authorities might have gone in this work of saving the lives of the starving in the affected areas would be hazardous to estimate; whether they would have come to the point of voluntarily sacrificing the profuse and gorgeous church ornaments with which the Orthodox churches fairly glittered, or whether they

would even under such circumstances stop short of that sacrifice, is impossible to tell. But it would be unbelievable that the church would remain deliberately indifferent to the intense suffering of the masses and the enormous resultant death rate which was daily increasing.

But the situation became complicated by the attitude which the government took in the matter: it insisted that the relief administration must be centralized in the hands of the governmental committee on relief, and pronounced the separate church committee as superfluous. Had normal conditions prevailed between the church and the state, this action of the government must necessarily be pronounced extremely unwise and indefensible; but conditions were anything but normal, and in relation to the church were, as a matter of fact, highly strained, and in that light one can understand the mistrust with which the authorities would look upon the separately administered relief carried on by the church. It is likewise evident that the authorities were unwilling to permit the church to gain the prestige or credit which such an independent action would necessarily imply. Hence all sums which had already been collected by the church committee on relief were ordered to be turned over to the state committee, and the demand was complied with.[1]

[1] There are some who affirm that the church authorities were not baffled even now: they are said to have approached, unofficially, the American Relief Administration, with the proposal of surrendering the unconsecrated church treasures to the American organization as a security for a foreign loan to be negotiated in behalf of the church. The reasons actuating the church to approach the American group were that they trusted it not to subject the church valuables to disrespectful handling; furthermore, the negotiators had hopes of recovering these objects again when better times should return. But unfortunately, the American Relief Administration, having bound itself by the Riga agreement with the Soviet authorities to refrain

The meager results which followed this disposition of the matter evidently impressed the Soviet authorities that much more could be done if the church were given greater freedom in handling the funds. Whatever the motives were which actuated the government, it issued an appeal which in some way modified the existing regulations:

Decision of the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee:

Taking into consideration the long list of solicitations from various religious societies asking for permission to make collections for the relief of the starving, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee decided:

1. To permit the ecclesiastical authorities and the various religious societies to make the collections;

2. To direct the *Centropomgol* (the Central Committee for Aid of the Starving) to enter into an agreement with the religious societies about the method of collection of contributions, having in view the wishes of the donors.

M. KALININ, *President A. C. E. C.*
A. ENUKIDZE, *Secretary A. C. E. C.*
Moscow, Kremlin, December 9, 1921.[2]

But in spite of all efforts of the government to stimulate the church to a larger giving, the results were not gratifying; whether rightly or wrongly, the conviction

from any acts which could be construed as interference with the internal administration, felt obliged to decline the proposal of the church as contrary to the Riga agreement. Upon inquiry at the offices of the American Relief Administration, an answer was returned stating that the office had no information or record of any such offer, and that the Administration could not have even considered the proposition except through the proper officials of the Soviet government. That disposes of this particular rumor as unfounded.

[2] N. N. Fioletov: *The Church and the Government in accordance with the Soviet Law*, 1923, pp. 21-22. (In Russian.) Also, *The Black Book*, p. 158. (In Russian.)

was growing in the minds of the authorities that the church was deliberately withholding its full measure of aid in the hope that it might thus contribute to the paralyzing of the government, and that the resultant failure of the authorities to grapple adequately with the staggering need might in turn result in its overthrow. This, as has been stated, need not necessarily have been the actual intention of the church, but the fact that the government was in the mood to believe it to be a fact produced the same result. And most unfortunately, for nothing really worse could have happened at the time than what did happen: the émigré clergy, most of whom had left in the wake of the White Guard armies, held, in December, 1921, a Sobor in Karlovtsi, in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and their irresponsible decrees rendered the situation in Russia decidedly worse. The Sobor was attended by nine archbishops, an archimandrite, and other high-placed ecclesiastics, most of whom had left Russia with the retreating armies of the would-be restorers of the ancient régime, such as Denikin, Wrangel, and others. Aside from the ecclesiastics, the Sobor was attended by a goodly number of former tsarist officials and officers of the tsarist and White Guard armies, as well as members of the *Black Hundred* party: the former ober-procuror of the Holy Synod, Count Volzhin; secretary of the tsar, Count Apraksin; the head of the general staff of the Wrangel army, General Arkhangel'sky; a former member of the governmental Council, Prince Putyatin; a minister in the Kolchak government, Lokot', and many others.

The total number in attendance at the Sobor reached almost one hundred.[3]

The Sobor elected as its president the most outstanding opponent of the Soviet régime and leader of the conservative party within the Russian church, Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), formerly of Kiev and Galicia, who, as will be remembered, was probably the chief candidate for the patriarchal cowl at the Sobor of 1917. His election to the presidency of the Karlovtsi Sobor was characteristic of the spirit dominating this assembly. What wonder that this group should adopt the extremely unwise political measure, resulting in untold injury to the interests of the church in Russia, in the *Message of the Church Sobor,* demanding the restoration of the monarchical government in Russia. At first, two-thirds of the members demanded an explicit statement that the throne be occupied by "a lawful, Orthodox tsar of the house of Romanov"; but this measure was opposed by the remaining one-third as unwise, and as tending to jeopardize, by tying it too closely with the fortunes of the commonly hated former imperial dynasty, the very goal desired—the restoration of the monarchy. The resolution was adopted, nevertheless, in accordance with the desires of the majority, *i.e.* in favor of the inclusion of a specific reference to the house of Romanov.

The Sobor also appealed to the army of Baron Wrangel to hold itself in readiness for the execution of its program. Besides, the president of the Sobor, Metropolitan Antony, issued a proclamation in January,

[3] Cf. Krasikov: *On the Church Front,* p. 187; also pp. 221-22. (In Russian.)

1922, appealing in the name of the Sobor to the Genoa Conference which was just then in session, and through it to the world:

. . . If during this conference, or afterwards, the Bolshevik régime in Russia should receive recognition as the legitimate one, there will result Bolshevik uprisings in one country after another. Their success or prevention depends upon the following measures: (1) upon non-recognition of Bolsheviks on the part of all governments; (2) upon the terrible havoc wrought by the famine, cold, and epidemic at present devastating Russia, which has been caused by the Bolshevik mismanagement. Peoples of Europe, and of the world, have pity upon this nation, and equip its sons with arms; then they, together with their dear comrades—officers, generals, and soldiers—will be ready to spring up and march into Russia, to rescue it from its enslavement by the robbers!

ANTONY, *Bishop of Galicia and Kiev, President of the Russian Ecclesiastical Administration Abroad.*[4]

This unhappy and highly compromising incident was used to excellent advantage by the authorities, who stressed the Sobor's reference to the famine as a proof that the church deliberately exploited the calamity by using it for the overthrow of the government. It has never been proven, I think, that Patriarch Tikhon had ever been in collusion with the Karlovtsi Sobor; but superficially viewed, the fact that a group of the Russian clergy, with such important leaders among them as was Antony, could pass such pronouncements as were passed at Karlovtsi, was supremely damaging to the

[4] Quoted from a speech of Krasikov at the trial of Metropolitan Benjamin in *Revolution and the Church,* 1-3, 1923, p. 83. (In Russian.)

church at home, and the charge of collusion has been repeatedly made. Even such a highly placed official of the Commissariat of Justice as was Krasikov directly indicted, in his book *On the Church Front,*[5] Patriarch Tikhon with having had full knowledge of the proceedings at Karlovtsi, and having secretly collaborated with the leaders there; he peremptorily demanded that the patriarch either acknowledge his direct connection with his subordinates who had met at the Karlovtsi Sobor, or "excommunicate them for conspiracy and treason." Patriarch Tikhon protested that he could not excommunicate anyone who was not living within his territorial jurisdiction; this may have been canonically correct, but it did not help to allay the very real suspicion which lurked in the minds of the authorities. The Karlovtsi incident was a most powerful factor in bringing on the crisis which culminated in the spring of 1922.

The action of the Karlovtsi Sobor was severely criticized even by some émigrés themselves, for to the more moderate elements among them it was obvious what a disastrous effect the pronouncement must necessarily produce in Russia. The former minister of confessions under the Kerensky government, A. Kartashev, condemned the political activity of the Sobor as both unwise and in the extreme injurious.[6] Prince Gregory Trubetskoy, who had fought in the White Guard Armies, publicly declared that, in all his dealings with the patriarch, the latter always resolutely refused to commit himself in any way to the White Guard position, and that he opposed the Karlovtsi Sobor.[7]

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 191.
[6] "Politics and the Church," in *Russian Thought,* Jan.-Feb., 1922. (In Russian.)
[7] *The Black Book,* pp. 161-62.

The famine, far from being put under control, grew to ever greater proportions, and was quickly attended by other dreaded scourges consequent upon it; typhus and a host of other diseases exacted enormous tolls. The extreme suffering of the people was indescribable. All help hitherto rendered proved utterly insufficient, and thousands, even hundreds of thousands, were doomed to death. The help coming from the church was not great, or possibly the church's wealth was grossly overestimated. Nevertheless, the result was the same: the church was suspected of unwillingness to help and of secretly hoping that the calamity would prove the political undoing of the Soviet government. It is no wonder that finally, early in 1922, the eyes of the government, as well as of many private individuals, began to turn toward the church treasures as a possible source of help. Newspapers began to point out that these treasures might prove the veritable and absolute victory over the famine: one writer estimated that if all church treasures were appropriated and turned into silver the total would amount to some five hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds of silver, which would be equivalent in value to the purchasing power of five hundred and twenty-five million pounds of bread, which in turn would suffice to feed the starving population.[8] To such alluring computations must be added the constant appeals addressed to the harassed government which the desperate population showered upon it in an effort to save itself or to save others. A sample of such a cry for help may be presented:

We, peasants and workers, wish to direct the attention of the central authorities to our difficult situation. People are unable to hold out. They are dying of

[8] *Izvestiya,* March 15, 1922.

starvation daily. The available aid is insufficient. Scarcely one-tenth of the starving are fed. The population seeks an escape from such a disaster.

The population is conscious that our government is poverty-stricken, that it has no means with which to feed all the starving. We are sincerely grateful to the government that it made the sowing of the fall wheat possible, and that now it has secured the seed for the spring sowing. But we would direct the attention of the authorities to the fact that there exists in our country great wealth deposited in churches and monasteries. We presume that this wealth is the property of the nation. We think that our Christian duty consists in using the goods to save the perishing brethren.

We beg our government to take measures to use the superfluous church property for the feeding of the famine-stricken. We present this petition in the conviction that the starving and everybody else who knows how the people suffer would support us in it.[9]

Although there is no doubt whatever that the need was overwhelmingly great, and the government really hard-pressed for means to save the famishing, and the church ornaments of gold, silver, and precious stones lay at hand offering ready means of at least partially relieving the emergency, let it not be forgotten that at the same time the Soviet authorities had the disposition of the former imperial jewels, the aggregate value of which was estimated, when I saw them in Moscow in the summer of 1926, at five hundred million rubles. It would be interesting to know how the retention of these treasures would be justified in the face of the supposed irresistible urgency and necessity for confiscating the church treasures.

[9] Quoted in Iona Brikhnichev: *Patriarch Tikhon and his Church,* Moscow, 1923, p. 12. (In Russian.)

The patriarch probably thoroughly sensed the gravity of the situation, and to forestall the worst issued, on February 19, 1922, a special proclamation by which he gave his permission and encouragement to all parochial councils and brotherhoods to sacrifice, for the needs of the starving, all unconsecrated ornaments and other objects of value which were found in churches except those used for worship purposes officially consecrated for church use. Such objects, of course, were comparatively few in number and of no great value; the patriarch, furthermore, specified distinctly that all articles which had been consecrated, whether used directly for worship purposes or not, could not be surrendered, for such action would constitute a breach of the canonical rules. This proclamation was permitted by the government to be printed and distributed among the people.

Thereupon the patriarch and the church were assailed in a series of violent attacks, in which Tikhon's position was represented as a refusal to save the lives of the starving by selfishly urging canonical impediments, and which alleged that his flimsy excuses were mere attempts to camouflage the callous, grasping greed of the church and its determination to impede the government by increasing its difficulties as much as possible. The state, on its part, was not loath to use the occasion to the fullest extent to humble and break its formidable opponent, the church, which it regarded, doubtlessly sincerely, as a dangerous anti-revolutionary organization, and which it was glad to damage or ruin as a part of the price to be paid for its own security and stability.

Hence the government now decided to act: on February 23, 1922, President Kalinin, in behalf of the

A.C.E.C., issued a decree directing the proper authorities to "remove" the church treasures not used for the purpose of worship from their repositories. The importance of this document again compels quoting:

In view of the necessity for quick mobilization of all the resources of the country to serve as means of struggle with the famine in the Volga region, and for the sowing of the fields there, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, supplementing the decree regarding the removal of property for museums, has decreed:

1. To instruct local soviets to remove from the ecclesiastical property, which was delivered for the use of groups of believers of all religions upon inventory and contract, within a month from the day of publication of this decree, all valuable objects of gold, silver, and precious stones, the removal of which cannot actually interfere with the interests of the cult itself, and to transfer them to the offices of the People's Commissariat of Finance, with the special designation for the Fund of the Central Commission for Aid of the Starving.

2. In order that this measure may be properly executed, each *gubernium* must organize a commission of responsible representatives of the *gubernial* executive committee, of the *gubernial* commission of aid for the starving, and the *gubernial* financial department, under the presidency of one of the members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, for the purpose of giving an exact account of the above-mentioned valuables as well as for their transfer to the organs of the People's Commissariat of Finance, and for the purpose of rendering a special account to the Central Commission of Aid for the Starving.

3. Revision of the contracts as well as the actual removal of the valuables after their inventory must be

done in the required presence of the representatives of the group of believers to whose use the property was transferred.

4. The removed property shall constitute a special fund and be accounted for separately, and must be used exclusively for the needs of the starving, in a manner specified in a special instruction prepared by the Central Committee for Aid of the Starving, with the consent of the People's Commissariat of Finance and the Commission for the accounting, removing, and collecting of the valuables.

5. A report of all the valuables taken from ecclesiastical property, and of their disposition, shall be made periodically in the newspapers by the Central Commission for Aid of the Starving, and at the same time the local papers must give a detailed description of the valuables taken from the local churches, places of prayer, synagogues, etc., with the specification of the name of those churches.

Signed: M. KALININ, *President A. C. E. C.*
A. ENUKIDZE, *Secretary A. C. E. C.*[10]

Let it be particularly noticed that the decree specifies that articles necessary for religious services, such as the chalice, paten, star, spoon, and dish, were to be left in the churches, as well as any other object the removal of which "would actually interfere with the interests of the cult itself." But the decree ignored the distinction made by Patriarch Tikhon in his earlier proclamation between the consecrated and the unconsecrated objects and ornaments.

Within two days,[11] the official instructions, issued by the Commission for the removal of ecclesiastical valuables, appeared, and in general proved to be amplifica-

[10] Published first in *Izvestiya*, No. 46, Feb. 26, 1922; quoted in N. N. Fioletov: *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

[11] *Izvestiya*, Feb. 28, 1922.

tions of the decree itself. But the same day these instructions were published, Patriarch Tikhon issued his famous answer to the decree, which, as it proved, was the beginning of the end of the long-drawn-out struggle between the church and the state. The document is of very great intrinsic value for a proper understanding of the intricate web of events which had such epoch-making consequences for the Russian church, and hence it is important to be acquainted with its exact text:

PROCLAMATION OF THE MOST HOLY PATRIARCH TIKHON REGARDING THE AID FOR THE STARVING

By the grace of God, humble Tikhon, patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia, to all faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Among the heavy calamities and trials which befell the world on account of our lawlessness, the greatest and the most terrible is the famine which affected wide regions inhabited by many millions of people. As early as August, 1921, when rumors about the terrible calamity began to reach our ears, we, regarding it our duty to come to the aid of our suffering spiritual children, addressed a message to the heads of the several Christian communions (to the Orthodox patriarchs, the Roman pope, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of New York), appealing to them, for the sake of Christian love, to make collections of money and provisions for the starving Volga region people.

At the same time, an All-Russian Committee of Aid for the Starving was organized, and money was being collected in all churches as well as among the various groups, to be devoted to the aid of the famine-stricken. But such a church committee was declared superfluous by the Soviet government, and all sums already col-

lected by it were ordered to be turned over (and were turned over) to the governmental committee.

However, in December, we were requested to collect, through the instrumentality of the administrative organs of the Holy Synod, the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council, the eparchial councils, and the diocesan and parochial councils, money and provisions to aid the starving.

Desiring to coöperate with every possible effort to aid the starving people of the Volga region, we found it possible to permit the parochial councils and societies to sacrifice, for the needs of the starving, the valuable ecclesiastical ornaments and objects which were not used for the divine services, and we announced this to the Orthodox population on February 6/19 of this year by a special proclamation which the authorities permitted to be printed and distributed among the people.

But there followed violent attacks upon the spiritual leaders of the church by the governmental newspapers, and then the All-Russian Executive Committee, in a rescript dated February 13/26, regarding aid to the starving, ordered all valuable ecclesiastical objects, including even the consecrated vessels and similar objects used in celebration of the divine services, to be removed from the churches.

From the point of view of the church, such an act is sacrilegious, and we esteem it our sacred duty to make known the view of the church regarding the act and to inform our faithful children about it.

In view of the extraordinarily disastrous circumstances, we permitted the possibility of sacrificing church objects which were not consecrated and were not used in the divine services. We exhort all faithful children of the church even now to make such sacrifices, desiring only that they be the response of a loving heart to the needs of their neighbor, so that they may

actually manifest genuine help to our suffering brethren. But we cannot approve the removal of the consecrated objects from our churches even though it were by way of a voluntary surrender, for their use for any other purpose than the divine service is prohibited by the canons of the Ecumenical church, and is punishable as sacrilege: in case of laymen, by excommunication; clergy, by degradation from their sacerdotal rank.

Given in Moscow, February 15, 1922.

(The Apostolic Canons, rule 73; the "Double" Council, rule 10.)

The humble TIKHON,
Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia.[12]

But what was it that Patriarch Tikhon really permitted to be taken out, and how much did it amount to? According to his own statement [13] these "unconsecrated objects of value not used in the divine services" comprised such small articles of ornamentation as chains, rings, bracelets, and old silver, which were presented for the adornment of various icons. The patriarch himself estimated that their value probably would not be great. The cause of dissatisfaction on the part of the government is therefore easily understandable.

On the other hand, the government justified its act, in the first place, by an appeal to the legal status of the question, in accordance with which the title to all property whatsoever, the ecclesiastical among the rest, was vested solely in the government, which permitted, in the case of groups of believers, the use of the church buildings with their full equipment, not as a matter of necessity but as a voluntary, unconstrained concession. Hitherto, the government had no

[12] Quoted from *The Black Book*, Appendix I, pp. 253-54.
[13] Reported in *Izvestiya*, March 15, 1922.

compelling need for the valuables stored in the church buildings; but the disastrous famine forced the hands of the authorities, and they, in seeking to use the valuables to save the lives of citizens, used but what belonged to the nation in the first place. The patriarch had no right to act as if he had a legal title to dispose of the property, for it did not belong to the church but was merely used by the church. His willful ignoring of this patent state of affairs was simply another instance of failure on the part of the church to acknowledge the existing government and its laws, and as such was an act of opposition or rebellion against it.

That this view was shared by some parties even within the church, later events amply proved; as an illustration of the perplexity into which some believing workmen were thrown by the action of the patriarch, a petition, sent by a group of workmen from the Moscow firm Dynamo, in which they confront the patriarch with the following appeal, may be quoted:

The only escape from our suffering is to buy bread for the starving with the church gold and silver. That gold and silver was collected through the ages, and is national property. Is it not possible now to turn, even though only a portion of that wealth, into bread? Does that contradict divine or human laws?

Most holy patriarch, remember that millions of people who are now about to perish will die of hunger with a curse upon their lips against God and the church which was unwilling to exchange golden goblets for wooden ones; remember that thousands of people who shall escape death by starvation will reject the church and our Orthodox faith, saying: Faith without works is dead.

We, Orthodox believers, beg you to listen to the

voice of those shepherds who are ready to give up everything for the starving brethren, to give heed to the groans of the millions of famished people, to the sound of their unspeakable sufferings and their death-groans, which are filling the Russian land. Come to their aid! Convert the gold, silver, and precious stones into bread, and save from death those who are starving!

Group of Believing Workers in the Establishment Dynamo.
March 23, 1922.[14]

To all such appeals and cries, as well as to all the criticism and denouncements heaped upon the church, the patriarch remained deaf. Could he or could not he do otherwise? Yes and no. That depends upon the disposition, the point of view, the inclination, the theology, the will of him who is to answer the question. There is no doubt that the church in its past history repeatedly brought its treasures to be used in relieving some extraordinary national calamity, or passively permitted itself to be despoiled of its hoard when a tsarist autocrat came and took it. The patriarch could have permitted the measure on the same ground, and with far greater justification, but he did not do it. The measure implied a certain degree of coöperation with the hated government, and even involved a certain amount of positive help toward the stabilization of it, by enabling it to overcome the fearful crisis into which the famine had plunged it. But by its uniformly anti-governmental policy, the church was already committed against any such action. Hence the patriarch sought refuge in professing obedience to the ancient canons, which, as a matter of undoubted fact, could be interpreted to support his stand. *The Apostolical*

[14] *Izvestiya,* March 23.

Canons, cited by Tikhon, specifically ruled:[15] "Let no one convert to his own use any vessel of gold or silver, or any veil which has been sanctified, for it is contrary to law; and if anyone be detected doing so, let him be excommunicated." This provision is amplified and explained at great length in rule 10, of the local Constantinopolitan Sobor of 862, known as "double," because it met twice, convoked for the purpose of terminating the iconoclastic struggle.[16] The gist of this quite intricate definition is that

whoever seizes for himself, or turns to another use than that of the divine service, either the sacred chalice, or the paten, or the spoon, or the revered altar cover, or the cover for the chalice, or any other consecrated and sacred vessels or robes found on the altar, falls under the sentence of deprivation of his rank . . . and whoever takes for himself or for others vessels or robes found within the altar, to be used for purposes other than that for which they were consecrated, is according to the rule excommunicated, and we likewise excommunicate him.[17]

It is plain from the context of these canons that they contemplated primarily the case of stealing of the sacred vessels or robes for private use, and that the eventuality of confiscation of such consecrated valuables by a government for purposes of saving a starving population from hunger was not even remotely envisaged, much less specified. But if one wishes to extend the letter of the law to cover even such cases, it

[15] *The Apostolical Canons,* rule LXXIII; quoted in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Second Series, New York, 1900, Vol. XIV, p. 598.

[16] Cf. A. P. Lopukhin: *The Theological Encyclopaedia,* St. Petersburg, 1907, Vol. VIII.

[17] *The Book of Rules,* Moscow, 1911, p. 263. (In Church-Slavonic.)

may be done with a certain degree of justification. The patriarch professed to feel obliged to interpret the rules in such a manner, and to obey them even if the consequences were as terrible as they were likely to be under the circumstances. From the patriarch's point of view, he was obeying the canons, which were held to be the supreme law in the church; hence he could not *approve* the removal of the church treasures, although he did not specifically forbid it: he merely stated that whoever should act contrary to the canons of the Ecumenical church should be punished in accordance with the provisions of those canons. To those who regarded every possible rule and enactment of the ancient Sobors as absolutely binding and immutable, and to be observed under all conditions whatever, the patriarch's course was not only justified, but even necessary, provided that his interpretation of the canons was correct. This is really the logical attitude of all conservative-minded legalists who acknowledge the absolute and immutable authority of all ancient pronouncements or creeds whatsoever, and it is the price they have to pay for it. But the person who holds that the church of to-day has the same right to regulate its life in accordance with the demands and ideals of the times as the ancient church which formulated the canons had, would probably differ from the patriarch's judgment in the matter under consideration, and would hold that the patriarch should have followed the merciful and humane course demanded by the overwhelming disaster into which the famine had plunged Russia, even though by doing so he had infringed the ancient rules. But that would be tantamount to expecting that Tikhon be not Tikhon: he was a conservative, legalistic-minded Orthodox hierarch, and as such could not do

otherwise than he had done. Moreover, he had the majority of the church with him in his way of thinking. Nevertheless, the fatal stand was destined to revenge itself fearfully upon Tikhon and the entire church.

The state authorities' case was tolerably clear: they had the law on their side, and the object of their measures was in the highest degree praiseworthy. They must have felt almost virtuous in adopting these coercive and destructive measures against the church. In addition to the legality of their position, it must be presumed that they were likewise actuated by a certain amount of desire to damage the church as much as possible, and to fish in the muddy waters. It must never be forgotten that there existed a tacitly acknowledged state of warfare between the two powers, and that the government was afflicted with no overwhelming scruples against making the most of its opportunity. The great chance which offered itself in the act of Tikhon was so excellent that it would have been an inexcusable blunder from the government's point of view had it been neglected. The Soviet authorities need scarcely ever be charged with the fault of neglecting their opportunities. Hence they went to work with a zeal and zest which ruthlessly carried out the mandate ordering the removal of ecclesiastical valuables from the churches. But as might be expected, the patriarch's proclamation was effective in restraining many priests and bishops from coöperating, and a number of them actively opposed the measures. Hence conflicts between the governmental authorities seeking to discharge their duty, and the masses of people gathered to protect the ecclesiastical valuables, were of daily occurrence throughout the

length and breadth of Russia, and in many instances resulted in bloodshed. The infuriated populace killed a number of officials, or again the authorities would use force against the people. According to the official register, there occurred 1,414 such bloody encounters,[18] among which the most serious were those which took place in the localities of Shuya, Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, Smolensk, Moscow, and especially in Petrograd. Resistance to the execution of the decree of February 23 was offered by the Orthodox as well as the Roman Catholic authorities, and was both active and passive. The situation resulted in wholesale arrests of the offenders, and a great number of trials terminated in death penalties.

As for the total amount in quantity and in value of the objects taken from the churches throughout Russia, it is impossible to gain any exact information on either one of these items. As always in Russia, the published official registers are confessedly incomplete, and therefore incorrect, and in many instances make no attempt to be clear or exact. The official estimates of the total value of the hoard are also self-contradictory, so that it is impossible to speak of the matter with any reasonable amount of certainty.[19] The total amount of the treasures must have been considerable, for any one who had seen the Russian cathedrals and monasteries before the war knows the magnificence and brilliance of the ornaments and treasures with which these places were decked by the munificence of the preceding centuries; of course, articles which were regarded as necessary for the conduct of worship, such as the chalice, paten, star,

[18] *The Black Book,* p. 288.

[19] Cf. the statistical tables of the itemized reports of confiscations in *The Black Book,* pp. 269-288.

spear, spoon, and the dish were left in every case in the church, so that it could not be said that the church was deprived of the very means of worship. Only duplicates of such articles, presumably, were taken out, for mention of them is made in the official register, and even the gospels, bound in silver covers, are mentioned in one instance. Nevertheless, no serious claim was ever made by the church authorities accusing the government of a systematic attempt to deprive the churches of the necessary instruments for the celebration of religious services.

Later, members of some local churches attempted to redeem articles which had been taken from churches, and thereafter to claim them as their personal property. But by the decree of the Commissariat of Justice, even such articles were declared as not belonging to the particular individual who redeemed them, or the congregation from which they were taken, but were pronounced the property of the state as they originally were, and hence were ordered to be registered as state property loaned for the use of the particular local congregation concerned.[20]

The trials of clergy and lay churchmen implicated in the obstruction of the execution of the decree regarding the ecclesiastical valuables agitated the country for months after the confiscation. The most outstanding of these trials were those of Petrograd and Moscow. The trial in Petrograd brought to the bench of the accused some eighty persons, among whom were such prominent individuals as the metropolitan of Petrograd, Benjamin; the president of the Administration of the Parochial Councils, Professor Novitsky;

[20] Decree of June 17, 1922, No. 359; quoted in *The Revolution and the Church,* 1-3, 1923, p. 39. (In Russian.)

two former members of the Duma, and other notable representatives of the church; but twenty-five of the eighty were released, upon examination, as not guilty. The group was charged with opposition to the governmental decree concerning the removal of ecclesiastical valuables, and with an unlawful and direct agitation among the people for the purpose of fomenting active opposition of the fanaticized masses to the authorities. The plan of the church authorities, as the prosecuting attorney construed it, was to incite the fanaticism of the masses by affirming that the action of the government was against the canons of the church, and constituted sacrilege. The plan was instigated by patriarch Tikhon, and its objective was said to be "to arouse unrest among the masses for the purpose of effecting a united front with the international bourgeoisie against the Soviet government."[21]

The charge leveled against Metropolitan Benjamin was that he, after receiving the patriarchal proclamation of February 28, presented the civil authorities with an "ultimatum" in which he demanded a proof that the government had exhausted all other sources of possible revenue; a guarantee that the ecclesiastical valuables would be used exclusively to aid the famine-stricken; and finally reserved a proviso that Patriarch Tikhon's consent to the proceedings must be secured (this after the latter's proclamation of February 28). Receiving no answer from the *Pomgol,* the metropolitan ordered the patriarchal proclamation to be read in the parishes, thus making himself equally responsible for branding the action of the government as sacrilegious.

Thereupon the Petrograd soviet invited the metro-

[21] *The Revolution and the Church,* 1-3, 1923, p. 97.

politan for an interview, and induced him to abandon the first and the third point, while they granted the second, which permitted three church representatives to oversee the work of the Commission to Aid the Starving. But later (March 12) the metropolitan recalled his representatives, making much more strict demands upon the authorities. Thereupon they dropped the parleys. Benjamin then issued a second proclamation to the people, which resulted in numerous and bloody disorders.[22] Aside from this, the prosecution charged him with a number of specific acts, as calling together councils of his clergy and of the parishes to impart to them instructions respecting opposition to the decree, making inciting speeches, etc.

Among those who were called to testify in the trial were members of the Petrograd clergy, Krasnitsky and Vvedensky, both of whom later became ringleaders of a revolutionary movement within the church, resulting in a schism. Both bore testimony essentially unfavorable to the accused, especially to Metropolitan Benjamin, and this act of theirs constitutes, in the estimation of the conservative party which came to be known under the designation of "patriarchal," the greatest blot on the character of these leaders of the opposing faction. They had been deprived of their office by the metropolitan, and therefore the patriarchal party claimed that subsequently they had no right to participate in any ecclesiastical action. It may be confidently affirmed that much of the fierce hatred between the parties is traceable to this action of the two priests who testified against their own ecclesiastical superior

[22] For details of the trial, see *The Revolution and the Church*, 1-3, 1923.

in a trial which resulted in the imposition of the death sentence upon him and others, as well as to the metropolitan's action against them.

The trial finally resulted, on July 6, 1922, in a verdict which imposed the death penalty upon ten of the accused, and confiscation of their property. The rest of the accused were sentenced to hard labor or a prison term extending from seven days to three years. But the All-Russian Central Executive Committee found it possible to change the sentence of the Petrograd revolutionary tribunal in a number of cases, and six of the ten death sentences were changed to imprisonment; the remaining four, however comprising Metropolitan Benjamin, Professor Novitsky, a former member of the Duma, Schein, and Kovsharov, were duly executed. They are now regarded by the patriarchal party as martyrs.

It is interesting to observe that the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, a revolutionary clerical organization which had succeeded in seizing the supreme power in the church, added to the sentence passed by the civil tribunal an ecclesiastical sentence of their own: they deprived Metropolitan Benjamin of his priestly and monastic rank; excommunicated the laymen Novitsky, Kovsharov, and two others from the church; deprived five other high ecclesiastical dignitaries of their priestly rank and office, and eight priests of their office, and passed milder ecclesiastical sentences upon the rest.[23]

The Moscow trial of the Roman Catholic dignitaries, Archbishop Tseplyak and Vicar-General Budkevich, had probably been a great deal more widely advertised

[23] *The Revolution and the Church,* 1-3, 1923, pp. 101-102.

in Western Europe and America than the trials of the Orthodox hierarchs. But the charges against them were of essentially similar character, and likewise resulted in death penalties: both Tseplyak and Budkevich were to be shot, five others were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, and eight others to a prison term of three years. Archbishop Tseplyak and Vicar-General Budkevich appealed to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which, it would seem, under the pressure of the deluge of protests which came from the western parts of Europe and from America, mitigated Archbishop Tseplyak's sentence to imprisonment for ten years. The death sentence passed upon Vicar-General Budkevich, however, was confirmed and carried out. It may be remarked that Archbishop Tseplyak was released from prison within two years.

A similar trial of the Orthodox clerical leaders and laymen was held in Smolensk and resulted in four death sentences,[24] besides lesser punishments inflicted upon a number of others. In Moscow, Archbishops Arsenius and Seraphim, and Bishop Ilarion, and almost all the members of the Supreme Church Administration and the Moscow Eparchial Council were brought to trial. As in the previous processes, death sentences were passed on eleven of the accused, while the rest suffered from one to five years' imprisonment.[25] During the trial, so much incriminating evidence against Patriarch Tikhon and Archbishop Nicander, his intimate colaborer, was gathered, that finally, on May 9,[26] the Moscow tribunal directed that Patriarch Tikhon (Citizen Belavin) and Archbishop Nicander (Citizen

[24] *The Revolution and the Church,* 1-2, 1924, pp. 39-86.
[25] *Izvestiya,* No. 101, May 10, 1922.
[26] *Izvestiya,* No. 100

Fanomenov) be brought to trial, and sent the collected evidence against them to the People's Commissariat of Justice.

The patriarch was charged with being in direct communication with monarchist organizations abroad, and with counter-revolutionary activity directed toward the overthrow of the existing régime at home; besides, he was indicted with the crime of inciting the masses to revolt. Thus the net result of the stand taken by the patriarch in his proclamation of February 28, if we may believe a source which otherwise is none too accurate in detail, was that fifty-five courts held two hundred and thirty-one trials, in which seven hundred and thirty-eight accused were tried; out of this total forty-four were sentenced to death.[27]

[27] Iona Brikhnichev: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGIN OF THE SCHISM

The beginnings of the movement which finally resulted in the abolition of the patriarchate and the outbreak of schism within the Russian church go back many decades, but its latter phase begins with the election of Patriarch Tikhon by the Sobor of 1917. As will be remembered, there was a determined minority in that assembly which opposed the restoration of the patriarchate on the ground that it was to be used as a means for the "strong policy" of those who wished to retain for the church all the unfair advantages which its connection with tsarism had afforded, and this minority regarded the election of the patriarch as a defeat of their program of democratization, and indeed of socialization, of the church. Immediately upon Tikhon's election, the official organ of this recalcitrant group published its manifesto condemning the action of the Sobor and declaring that the sole reason for the group's continued stay within the church was its determination to overthrow the patriarchate.[1] The initiator of the movement was Archpriest Shavelsky, but among the original members was found a man who was later to attain the greatest preëminence in the movement—Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky, who

[1] Cf. the testimony of one of these men, Vvedensky, *The Church and the Government,* p. 110.

later became Metropolitan Krutitsky (vicar of Moscow). The group instantly set about organizing opposition forces in various cities, but its efforts met with but scanty success.

The group saw its chance for a determined action when, in retaliation for the publication of the decree ordering the removal of church treasures, the patriarch issued his famous pronouncement threatening with degradation and excommunication any one who should obey the governmental decree. A number of high-placed hierarchs had, indeed, protested against the patriarchal stand from the beginning. For instance, Bishop Polycarp of Lukyanov wrote: "It is sinful to hold in our sanctuaries treasures for which we have no use, while in the meantime people are suffering agonies of hunger."[2] A similar proclamation was issued by Tikhon, the archbishop of Voronezh. The archbishop of Novgorod, Evdokim, wrote several letters to the patriarch and his associates, protesting against their mistaken policy.[3] This was the opportunity for which the Petrograd group of the progressive clergy had been waiting so long. They had also protested against Tikhon's attitude as early as the fall of 1921, but their expostulations were treated as a gesture which brought no appreciable results. They had now decided upon an energetic action, and on March 25 published the famous *Letter of Twelve Priests,* which may be said to be the beginning of the schism which was to rend the Russian church in twain. This document, so important in spite of the rambling style, is here given in full as it was printed in the official governmental paper, the *Izvestiya*:

[2] *Izvestiya,* March 23, 1922.
[3] Titlinov: *The New Church,* Petrograd, 1923, p. 7. (In Russian.)

Proclamation of a Group of Priests

The events of the last few weeks have settled beyond all doubt the actuality of two divergent views in church circles regarding the aid to the starving. On the one hand, there are churchmen, who, out of principle (on account of one or another theological or non-theological consideration) do not desire to sacrifice any treasures for the purpose of aiding the starving. On the other hand, there is a multitude of other church people who are ready, in order to save the dying, to make every kind of sacrifice, including the conversion of the church treasures into bread to feed the hungering Christ (for hungering Christ cf. Matt. xxv: 31-46).

Some members of the hierarchy of the Russian church have already authoritatively spoken about the necessity of coming to the aid of the starving, with all the apostolic zeal, even with the church treasures: for instance, Archbishop Evdokim, Archbishop Seraphim, Archbishop Mitrophan, and a number of other hierarchs, as well as many archpriests and priests.

Such wicked and provocative talk[4] convicts the individuals of the clerical order who think in such manner of being traitors and masked enemies of the church. God and the public conscience will be their judges.

However, that openly unchristian feeling which animates many church people, the feeling of malice, heartlessness, and slander, the confusing of the church with politics, and so forth, obliges us to make the following declaration:

It is no secret for those acquainted with the situation that a certain element in the church belongs to it not with their heart or soul, but with their body only.

The faith of Christ does not permeate their whole being, does not constrain them to act and to live in accordance with itself.

[4] *I.e.* against aiding the starving (note of the translator).

That is thought to be the case especially among that number of ecclesiastics among whom the feeling of malice exists, and hence plainly witnesses to the absence of Christ. (John xviii. 35.)

One's heart is pained by it, and the soul weeps.

Brethren and sisters in the Lord!

People are dying! Old men are dying, children are dying. Millions are doomed to perish. Have not our hearts been moved yet?

If Christ be with us, where then is his love toward all—the near and the distant, the friends and the enemies? Where is the love which, according to God's word, is higher than the law? Where is the love which is ready to overcome all obstacles in order to render aid? For indeed it was such a love which the Lord taught us. Is it impossible to be comprehended?

The heartlessness, the human calculation of some which was manifested so sadly in connection with the famine, constrain us to speak plainly; we, Christians, must conform our lives to the commands of Christ.

In particular, regarding the question of church treasures and the possibility of their use for famine relief, we assume that it is our moral and Christian duty to make the sacrifice. Indeed, theoretically, that is what even Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Benjamin and other hierarchs permitted us to do.

The believers will willingly come to the aid of the government if no violence be used (regarding which official authorities assure us). The believers are willing to surrender, if need be, even the sacred vessels, if the government will permit the church itself to feed the starving, even though it be done under a strict governmental supervision; the authorities have expressed themselves to the effect that such an arrangement would be possible.

Thus we shall be ready for sacrifices, and resolutely separate ourselves from those who, calling themselves

Christians, in the matter under consideration look upon it differently and in such wise follow and invite others to the path of indifference toward those who are dying of starvation, and even to the culpable, Christ-forbidden path of violence in defense of the church treasures.

Churchmen! An unfortunate misunderstanding of that question has separated us! We must, with mutual love, with mutual respect, and burning with love for those of our brethren who are perishing of starvation, help them all even to the surrender of our lives. That is what Christ expects of us!

ARCHPRIEST
John Al'binsky
Alexander Boyarsky
Alexander Vvedensky
Vladimir Voskresensky
Eugene Zapol'sky
Michael Popov
Paul Raevsky

PRIEST
Eugene Belkov
Michael Gremyachevsky
Vladimir Krasnitsky
Nicholas Syrensky

DEACON
Timothy Skobelev [5]

The same issue of the *Izvestiya* (March 29) published items announcing the protests of the bishop of Volsk, Job, and of Kursk, Nikon, against the patriarch's policy, and demanding the sale of the church treasures in aid of the famishing. The next day, the *Izvestiya* [6] printed a letter from Bishop Antonin, dated the day earlier and addressed to Patriarch Tikhon, in which the latter was informed that President Kalinin had requested the writer to become a member of the governmental Board of Aid for the Starving. The bishop goes on to say that according to Kalinin's statement, "the main reason why I was chosen for the *Kompomgol* was the desire of the government to give to the church people through me a possibility of

[5] First published in *Krasnaya Gazeta,* March 25; reprinted in *Izvestiya,* No. 71, March 29.
[6] No. 72, March 30.

supervision of the disposition of the treasures, their exchange for currency, and the purchasing of bread for the starving with the money thus realized."

The government, as was already seen, brought to trial many representatives of the church, the hierarchs, priests, and laymen, for the many riots and bloody encounters with the officials attempting to carry out the provisions of the decree of February 23. According to the testimony of Krasnitsky and Boyarsky given at the trial of Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd, the message which the metropolitan sent to the parishes, ordering the observance of Tikhon's instructions in the matter of the surrender of church treasures, was one of the direct causes of the reorganization of the group of *the Twelve* for the purpose of opposing Benjamin's activity, because the group was afraid that it might fanaticize the "dark" masses and hurl them into pogroms and bloody riots, as it actually did.[7] The trial of the Moscow clergy revealed so much of what was regarded as incriminating evidence against Metropolitan Tikhon that finally the Moscow tribunal ordered that Patriarch Tikhon and his chief adviser, Archbishop Nicander, be brought to trial.[8] Thereupon the patriarch was placed under home arrest in the patriarchal headquarters in the Troitskoe podvor'e, and was thus prevented from carrying on the work of his chancery. The Petrograd group of reformists now decided to act. In the first place, it issued, on May 13, a proclamation to "the believing sons of the Orthodox Church of Russia." It is of importance, especially for the problem of the origin of the schism within the church of Russia, to know exactly what

[7] Cf. *The Revolution and the Church,* 1923, 1-3, p. 78.
[8] *Izvestiya,* No. 100, May 9, 1922.

the successive steps leading to that disaster were. For that reason, even at the risk of encumbering the story with lengthy quotations from official sources, it is thought wise to give the proclamation in full:

Brethren and sisters in Christ!

In the course of the last few years, in accordance with the will of God, without which nothing in the world comes to pass, the Workers-Peasants' government came into power in Russia.

It took upon itself the task of liquidating the heavy consequences of the World War, a struggle with the famine, epidemics, and the remaining disorders of the governmental life.

The church, in the meantime, remained aloof from this great struggle for truth and the well-being of humanity.

The heads of the church were on the side of the enemies of the people.

This became manifest, in so far as every current incident was accompanied by a counter-revolutionary uprising within the church. Such things happened more than once. At the present time, similar sad occurrences have taken place before our own eyes, in the matter of converting the church treasures into bread for the starving. Such an act should have been an occasion for a joyous manifestation of love for the perishing brother, but it was converted into a conspiracy against the government.

It resulted in bloodshed. Blood was shed that the hungering Christ might not be aided.

By the refusal to help the starving, churchmen were attempting to bring about the overthrow of the government. The proclamation of Patriarch Tikhon became the standard around which rallied the counter-revolutionists, outwardly disguised in ecclesiastical garb.

But the wider masses of the people and the majority

of the rank and file of the clergy did not heed their call. The popular conscience condemned those guilty of shedding blood, and the death of those who succumbed to the famine falls with a heavy reproach upon those who wished to exploit the national calamity for their own political ends.

We, the undersigned clergy of the Orthodox church, representing the opinions of wide ecclesiastical circles, condemn the actions of those hierarchs and those pastors who are guilty of organizing opposition to the governmental authorities in the matter of aiding the starving and in other undertakings for the good of the workers.

The church by its very essence should represent a society of love and truth, and not a political organization, or a counter-revolutionary party.

We consider it necessary that a local Sobor be called without delay for a trial of those who are guilty of the ruin of the church, as well as to order the ecclesiastical government, and to establish normal relations with the Soviet authorities. The civil war which is carried on by the supreme administration against the government must be stopped.

Every faithful and loving son of the church will doubtless approve our petition with which we appealed to the government authorities, asking to grant us the permission to call a local Sobor speedily for the purpose of ordering the church and pacifying the national life.

Bishop Antonin

Representatives of the
progressive clergy
of Petrograd: Priest Vladimir Krasnitsky
Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky
Priest Eugene Belkov
Psalm-singer Stephen Stadnik

of Moscow: Priest Ivan Borisov
Priest Vladimir Bylkov
of Sarotov: Archpriest Rusanov
Archpriest Ledovsky

May 13, 1922.[9]

This was a most important step which the group had taken, for it defined essentially the program of the party, as it was later, step by step, realized. But the group did not rest content with mere proclamations; it sent a delegation, consisting of the archpriest Vvedensky, the priest Belkov, and the psalm-singer Stadnik, to interview the patriarch in Moscow. Upon their arrival in Moscow, they were joined by Priest Krasnitsky, who was there on private business, and by Priest Kalinovsky, and together they sought audience with the patriarch; they were received by him on May 12. Using as their basis the unhappy outcome of the Moscow trial, which had just been concluded (May 9), and which pronounced eleven death sentences upon those found guilty of opposing the decree regarding the removal of church treasures, they held the patriarch morally responsible for the disaster. It was the opinion of the group that the patriarchal proclamation of February 28 provoked renewed outbreaks of hostility against the government.

Priest Krasnitsky, who seems to have been the chief spokesman of the party, then confronted the patriarch with a résumé of what he regarded as Tikhon's counter-revolutionary measures, among which he enumerated (1) the anathema pronounced against the government on January 19, 1918, upon the occasion of the first attempt to put into practice the decree nationalizing

[9] *Izvestiya,* No. 106, May 14, 1922.

all property in Russia; (2) the patriarchal instructions of February 15, 1918, advising the priests to secrete the church property so that it could not be found by the commissioners, and also advising the organization of brotherhoods for the defense of church property; (3) according to Krasnitsky's account, these instructions resulted in 1,414 bloody encounters of the people with the governmental authorities; (4) furthermore, the spokesman of the progressive group affirmed that one of the patriarch's deeds of counter-revolutionary import was his sending to the former tsar, Nicholas Romanov, who was at the time imprisoned in Ekaterinburg, the patriarchal blessing along with consecrated wafers, which commission was performed by Bishop Hermogen; (5) moreover, the patriarch was charged with the guilt of ordaining and placing in high, influential positions a large number of individuals generally known to be strong partisans and protagonists of the old monarchist régime; (6) and finally, the patriarch was accused of having converted the church into a political organization, in which the most determined monarchist elements, under cover of their spiritual concerns, were attempting to overthrow the Soviet régime.

On the basis of these charges, and stressing the present anarchy prevailing in the church as a result of the patriarch's policies, the group demanded the immediate issue of a call for a national Sobor, for the purpose of deciding upon and inaugurating new policies for the church, and the patriarch's complete retirement from the exercise of his authority until the final settlement of the question by the Sobor.[10]

According to the version of Vvedensky, who later

[10] Vvedensky, an eye-witness, in *op. cit.*, pp. 248-49.

described further details of the interview, the patriarch, after some hesitation, consented to the demands of the group, with these words: "I have not sought the patriarchal office, and it weighs me down like a cross. I shall be glad if the future Sobor should release me from the patriarchate, and at present I shall retire from the administration of the church, and shall transfer my authority to the eldest of the hierarchs." [11] Thereupon, he wrote two letters: one to Kalinin, president of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, acquainting him with his intention to transfer the patriarchate to another hierarch; and the other to Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslavl, in which he appointed him his substitute, and asked him to come to Moscow to take charge of his new duties.[12] But before the designated hierarch could come, the administration of the church ceased to function; thus for a time the patriarchal chancery was closed. It was this circumstance which prompted a few members of the delegation to have another interview with the patriarch, which they obtained on May 18, when they presented him with a written statement of an astoundingly daring request—considering what strained relationships existed between themselves and the patriarch—that they themselves be appointed to care for the administration of the chancery until Agathangel should arrive. This curious document is of the greatest importance, for it really represents the basis of the assumption of the supreme authority in the church of Russia on the part of the *Living Church* group, and consequently of

[11] Quoted in *The Messenger of the Synod,* No. 3, 1925; p. 7. (In Russian.)

[12] *The Living Church,* the official organ of the *Living Church* group, May 23, 1922; also No. 3, 1925; also *Izvestiya,* No. 108, May 17, 1922.

the schism. It is, therefore, well worth while to have it presented in full:

To his Holiness,
the Most Holy Patriarch Tikhon:

In view of the abdication of your holiness from the administration of the church until the time of the calling of the Sobor, and of your transfer of authority to one of the elder hierarchs, the church remains at present, as a matter of fact, without any kind of administration.

That circumstance show itself extraordinarily detrimental to the course of general church life, and especially in Moscow, exciting thereby a great disturbance of minds.

We, the undersigned, have petitioned the governmental authorities for permission to open the chancery of your holiness and start its functioning.

By the present letter we filially ask for your holiness' blessing upon it, in order that the harmful cessation in the administration of church affairs be terminated.

Your substitute, then, upon his arrival, will immediately enter upon the discharge of his duties.

For these labors in the chancery, until such time as the final formation of the administration under the headship of your substitute be accomplished, we temporarily engage bishops now at liberty in Moscow.

The unworthy servants of your holiness,

Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky
Priest Eugene Belkov
Priest Sergei Kalinovsky [14]

This memorable conference took place in the patriarchal headquarters in the Troitskoe podvor'e; the room in which the scene was enacted is a large, mid-

[14] Quoted from the official organ of the Holy Synod, *The Messenger,* No. 2, 1925, p. 18.

Victorian chamber, rather shabbily furnished, with ancient carved and upholstered sofa and chairs, and two tables covered with old-fashioned table-covers. The walls are adorned with a few oil paintings representing ancient patriarchs. From the windows one may look into a garden, at present used for amusement purposes by a communistic organization. It is very difficult to realize that this utterly ordinary-looking room was the scene of some of the most important episodes in modern Russian church history.

Upon being presented with the above-quoted document, the patriarch continued in earnest conference with the group for an hour and a half, but finally yielded to the request, seeing the advisability and usefulness of the action. Had he foreseen what use would be made of his consent! But at the time "it was hid from his eyes"; it is difficult to attach any blame to him for not foreseeing the future, as the prophetic gift is not one generally vouchsafed to human beings.

Deciding to grant the petition, the patriarch wrote at the top of the same document upon which the petition was presented to him his own resolution regarding the matter:

May 5/18, 1922. The persons named below are ordered to take over and transmit to the Most Reverend Metropolitan Agathangel, upon his arrival in Moscow, and with the assistance of Secretary Numerov, the synodical business; (administration of) [15] the Moscow eparchy (to be entrusted) [15] to the Most Reverend Innocent, bishop of Klinsk, and before his arrival to the Most Reverend Leonid, bishop of Vernensk, with the assistance of the departmental chief Nevsky.

[15] Added by the translator.

For the hastening of my departure and the lodging in the patriarchal residence of the Most Reverend Agathangel, I beg that Archimandrite Anempodist (Alekseev) be given leave.

P. Tikhon[16]

This presentation of the essential events of the memorable transaction, so frought with meaning for the immediate future of the church, is fully confirmed by the patriarch's own version of the story, which he published immediately upon his release from prison. He described the events as follows:

On May 18 of the previous year, during our imprisonment in the Troitskoe podvor'e, the priests Vvedensky, Belkov, and Kalinovsky (who but a short time previously had renounced the holy orders) visited us, and under the pretext of caring for the welfare of the church, presented us with a written statement, wherein they complained that in consequence of the existing circumstances, church business remained unattended to. They begged us to intrust our chancery to them, in order that they might properly classify the correspondence received. Considering it a useful measure, we yielded to their solicitation and inscribed their petition with the following resolution: [Then follows the resolution given above, but omitting the last unimportant paragraph.][17]

From the foregoing reports, this much, at least, is clear: the interview of the delegation of the progressive clergy succeeded in inducing the patriarch temporary to surrender his authority in favor of one of the elder hierarchs, until the Sobor which the acting

[16] Quoted from *The Messenger,* No. 2, 1925, p. 18.
[17] *The Public Proclamation,* July 15, 1923.

patriarch was to convene should deliberate upon the new situation and in the light of the facts as then discovered should order the administration and policy of the church anew. Having induced the patriarch to take that momentous step, the group then applied to the government for permission to reopen the patriarchal chancery, which by reason of Tikhon's voluntary surrender of active direction of affairs, as well as by reason of his arrest, was not functioning at the time; at the same time, the group asked the patriarch's approval of this step, urging upon him the enormity of confusion which would ensue should the administration of the chancery not function for a long time. They expressly stated that this arrangement should be only temporary, and clearly specified that, upon the arrival of the *locum tenens,* they themselves would retire from the duties thus entrusted to them. Finally, they proposed to seek the aid of, and augment their own forces by adding to their numbers, the bishops "now at liberty in Moscow," without naming any particular individual; but as it turned out, they secured the coöperation of Bishop Antonin, the old stormy petrel of the Russian church, who had long before been retired because he became a *persona non grata* with the old bureaucratic Holy Synod, when after the tsarist grant of the "representative" government Antonin refused to designate the tsar in the liturgy any longer as "autocrat." To all this the patriarch consented, giving at the same time general instructions regarding the procedure, from which it is abundantly clear that the contemplated interim arrangement was regarded by him as of but short duration. Of course, it had never occurred to him what might happen if the arrangements decided upon for some reason miscarried;

certainly he had not anticipated the use to which his permission was to be put.

Events now succeeded each other with swiftness; the next day after the interview with the progressive group, Patriarch Tikhon left the Troitskoe podvor'e and removed to the Donskoy Monastery, on the outskirts of Moscow, which was to become his headquarters till the time of his death. On May 20, the *Izvestiya* reported that the progressive group, acting on the basis of the patriarchal permission to take over the chancery, moved into the former patriarchal residence. But they did more than that: without any patriarchal permission, they organized themselves into the Provisional Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, consisting of Bishop Antonin, the old-time leader of the progressives, and Bishop Leonid, the only one of the number mentioned by Patriarch Tikhon in his instructions, whom he had appointed as temporary administrator of the Moscow eparchy; besides these, the new Administration comprised the already well-known leaders of opposition to the patriarchal policies, Vvedensky, Krasnitsky, Kalinovsky, and Belkov, to whom were added Deacon Skobelev, and a layman, Khlebnikov.[18] The following day, the *Izvestiya* again reported the affair, adding to the names already mentioned those of Archpriest Al'binsky and Priest Voskresensky. The new Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration then, with Bishop Antonin at its head, entered the former patriarchal headquarters as new master of the situation, to inaugurate an era in the Russian church even stormier and more fruitful of inner conflicts than the immediate past had been.

The new Administration appointed Bishop Leonid

[18] *Izvestiya,* No. 111, May 20, 1922.

temporary metropolitan of Moscow, and drew the former court chaplain, Protopresbyter Lyubimov, into its service, detailing him for the organization of relations with the monasteries. It likewise announced its assumption of the supreme office in the church till the final settlement of the new ecclesiastical policy by the Sobor, intimating at the same time that this body was to be called as early as the month of August of the current year. It is apparent, therefore, that originally the group did not expect to stay long in the office thus procured by them, and were not so hostile to Tikhon as they became later, for they continued to recite the name of the patriarch in the liturgical services for two months longer.[19]

But why did Metropolitan Agathangel delay his coming? A pretty story regarding this question was told by Protopresbyter Krasotin to the delegates of the third Sobor (1925), namely, that about a month after Agathangel was commissioned to the office of acting patriarch, he, Krasotin, was sent to Yaroslavl as a delegate. He visited the metropolitan, and upon finding him rather unconcerned about the task entrusted to him by Tikhon, Krasotin expressed his surprise at the fact; thereupon the metropolitan gave him a strict lecture, the burden of which was that it was none of the priest's business what he, a metropolitan, was doing or not doing.[20] But the patriarchal party tells quite a different story, which certainly appears much more credible: Metropolitan Agathangel could not assume the office to which he was called by the patriarch, because the government refused him the necessary permission to leave Yaroslavl and come to

[19] Article by Rostovtsev: "Conference of the Group Living Church," in *The Living Church,* No. 10, Oct. 1, 1922, p. 7.

[20] *The Messenger,* 1925, p. 14.

Moscow. It is furthermore suggested, although without any proof, that the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration was actively concerned in the action of the government. At any rate, Agathangel could not come to Moscow, and shortly afterwards was arrested on charges of counter-revolutionary activity, and exiled to the Narymsky territory. Under those circumstances, he published a proclamation in which he stated that he was prevented from exercising the duties of the office laid upon him by Patriarch Tikhon, and in virtue of his authority as patriarchal substitute, he empowered each bishop, archbishop, and metropolitan independently to rule his diocese in accordance with the canonical rules until such a time as either he or Patriarch Tikhon should be free to resume the exercise of the supreme authority.

Bishop Innocent was likewise detained from assuming the duties to which the patriarchal resolution had called him. Thus out of all the persons selected by Tikhon to assume the supreme administration of the church in his stead, only one actually served, and that was Bishop Leonid, who administered the Moscow eparchy. That the development of affairs which actually took place was not foreseen by Tikhon need not be stressed; and that had he had the least inkling as to the group of people who were to assume power in the church by reason of his innocent and harmless permission "to open the chancery and carry on its work," it is certain that he would not have assented to the request. There is no doubt whatever that he regarded the entire assumption of administrative power on the part of the *Living Church* group as a deceit of himself and an usurpation of his authority.

About the first thing which the new Supreme

Ecclesisatical Administration did—let it be said to its credit—was to issue an appeal to the Soviet authorities for a merciful dealing with those members of the Moscow clergy and hierarchs who had been recently sentenced to the death penalty for obstructing the execution of the decree concerning the church treasures. "Coming forward," the appeal reads, "sincerely to serve the Russian people in the matter of pacifying those who are hostile, and unifying all honorable citizens for the regeneration of our native land, we, the undersigned, present you with a fervent appeal for mercy upon those of the Moscow clergy who were sentenced to death.[21] This was a noble thing to do, provided that it was not a mere *ad hominem* trick; but, alas, in the partisan passions which animate the two chief parties within the Russian church such incidents are all too often forgotten. A similar appeal was addressed through the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration to the governmental authorities on July 9, when Nicholas Sobolev was created archbishop of Petrograd; this appeal petitioned for mercy in dealing with the Petrograd group, among whom was Metropolitan Benjamin, who were pronounced guilty of inciting the masses to resistance in connection with the decree regarding the church treasures, and were in consequence sentenced to death. Some of these sentences were actually changed to milder ones, but undoubtedly there were other and more powerful reasons for doing so.

Nevertheless, the group soon came to the point where it could successfully ignore all finer shades of the transaction with the patriarch by virtue of which it was given the initial opportunity to move into the patri-

[21] Dated May 17, and reprinted in *The Living Church,* No. 2, May 23, 1922.

archal chancery. It would be extremely difficult to hold that these men were totally ignorant of the real intentions of the patriarch as to the scope of activity which Tikhon had in mind when he entered into the above-described arrangement with them. But they do not seem to have suffered from overscrupulousness, and soon began to affirm stoutly that they were the rightful and canonical possessors of the supreme administrative office by reason of their appointment to the position by the patriarch himself. They loudly claimed, in print as well as in their public speeches, that they were Tikhon's successors. Bishop Antonin is reported to have declared on one occasion, when it was suggested that the program of the group should receive Tikhon's approval: "He would not approve any of our reforms. Besides, since Patriarch Tikhon transmitted his authority to the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration without any reservation, we have no necessity now to run after him to receive from him what he no longer possesses. We must definitely separate ourselves from the old ecclesiastical anti-social policy."[22]

It is this very thing which became the bone of contention between the two parties within the church, and ultimately led to a schism. On the one hand, certain leaders, together with the masses, held that the patriarchal authority was usurped by a designing group of ecclesiastical revolutionaries, who, by wrenching the meaning and stretching the letter of Tikhon's resolution, uncanonically seized the supreme power; on the other hand, the *Living Church* group retorted that they were carrying out, practically to the letter, the instructions given them by the patriarch:

[22] *Izvestiya,* No. 132, June 16, 1922.

he had appointed them temporarily in charge of the chancery, till such a time when his substitute should arrive in Moscow, and the substitute was to hold office till the final adjudication and settlement of the whole matter by the Sobor. Through no fault of their own, the progressives claimed, both Metropolitan Agathangel and Bishop Innocent found it impossible to come to assume their offices, and until they came, the group was right in holding the supreme power; they professed the intention of calling the Sobor speedily, and then of surrendering their power to that body. It must be owned that there are certain elements of truth in both these claims which give strength to both parties. But it would appear, on the basis of the data presented, that the only solid basis of the new Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration's claim is the revolutionary right of overthrowing by force any organization which refuses to reform itself in accordance with the demands of the times, and by its persistent opposition and obstinate hostility threatens to bring destruction upon the body which it purports to govern. But to rest its case upon the legalistic canonicity of the particular process whereby the group acquired its power would appear like a deliberate courting of defeat and a rejection of its claims as a whole. The legal basis is quite obviously insecure and dubious for such an organization as the *Living Church* to resort to, for the process whereby their power was attained was not, and cannot be argued into being, a canonical one. This does not mean that it was not at all valid; that need not necessarily be true. A merely canonical basis may in itself be weaker and of less real consequence than a sound revolutionary one, provided that the revolution is really inevitable for saving the organization con-

cerned from utter destruction. But even if the revolt against the policies of Patriarch Tikhon be justified on revolutionary grounds, on their ethical side the measures adopted in the attempt to justify the process left much to be desired. Had they claimed nothing but the right to revolution under conditions which threatened to overthrow the organization which the existing authorities were sworn to preserve, they would have been entitled to the same kind of justification which all similar revolutions are accorded.

As a matter of fact, a certain amount of recognition was accorded the new administration even by the representatives of the hierarchy: thus in a meeting of the Moscow diocese, held on May 26, the establishment of the new authorities was approved "as having been called forth by a canonical necessity." Moreover, Sergei, metropolitan of Vladimir, Evdokim, archbishop of Nizhni Novgorod, and Seraphim, archbishop of Kostroma, likewise accorded it the sanction of their acknowledgment.

The reformist group which had seized, in such an essentially revolutionary manner, the supreme power in the church of Russia, soon organized itself. But even before its definite organization and adoption of a statement of its aims, the loosely coherent group began to voice its demands. As early as May 5, in the very first number of the official organ of the group, called *The Living Church,* Krasnitsky expressed the elementary demands of his fellow-reformists by insisting upon a change of personnel in the highest offices, and upon the calling of a new national Sobor which would bring about pacification of the almost intolerable relations existing between the church and the state, which without exaggeration could be termed a state of civil

war.[23] In the next number of this same publication, it was furthermore specified that the principle of separation of the church from the state must be acknowledged as the *sine quâ non* of the new ecclesiastical policy, and as a matter settled once for all. One is considerably surprised to read what the next Sobor was expected to accomplish: it was confidently affirmed by these reformists that the traditional immobility and the frigid, static conservatism of the Orthodox church must give way to a new psychology—to that of a "dynamic, vital, moving, creative progress from one attainment to another."[24] Secondly, the article declared that capitalism, from the Christian point of view, must be acknowledged as "the great lie." The divine worship must cease to be the soulless ceremonialism which it so long had been; the episcopal office must no longer stand for ecclesiastical despotism, and must transform itself wholly into a source of the mystical, spiritual power and divine grace vouchsafed to the church through the episcopal succession. Finally, the very decrease in the ranks of the monks, occasioned by the confiscation of monastic property, should force upon the church the necessity of admitting the "white," *i.e.* married, clergy to the episcopal office, and thus acknowledging and reinstituting the early-Christian married episcopate. This article is probably the earliest public declaration of the general principles of the reformists, and it admittedly presents a bold program. The man courageous enough to outline such an objective was no other than Alexander Vvedensky.[25]

[23] Cf. *The Living Church*, No. 1, May 1922, p. 3.
[24] *Ibid.*, No. 2, May 23, 1922, p. 4.
[25] *Ibid.*, No. 2, May 23, 1922.

These ideals were soon to be written into the official platform of the whole party, organized shortly after the publication of this article. The constituent conference of the organization was held in Moscow, on May 29, 1922, and was attended by 146 delegates, of whom, however, only 36, *i.e.* just about one-fourth, adopted the platform of the *Living Church,* as the organization came to be called, and thus became the founding members of it. Their definition of the aims of the group, which closely follows the ideas expressed by Vvedensky in the above-mentioned article, is so intrinsically valuable for a proper estimate of the movement that an extended statement of it must be risked.

The first section dealt with dogmatic reforms, which comprised a return to the primitive Christian teaching, with an emphatic development of the doctrine of the humanity of Christ, and a struggle against the scholastic interpretation of Christianity. God was to be conceived as a God of love, rather than a wrathful judge. The universe was affirmed to have been evolved by the might of God, but by means of natural processes. Salvation was to be conceived as the reawakening of the filial sense in men through God's love of them. The church of Christ is a human-divine society established for the purpose of realizing the divine truth upon earth. The last judgment, heaven, and hell are concepts to be interpreted ethically.

Among the ethical reforms demanded by the group were: rejection of the monastic (ascetic) teaching that salvation was to be gained only by renunciation of the world and by suppression of the natural human desires; in contradiction to this, salvation was to be sought under the conditions of faithful performance of the ordinary duties and labors imposed by life. The family

is the foundation of ethical and moral life; women therefore must have equal rights with men. The equality of all workers in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor is to be affirmed as the primary concern of the government. The moral and material support of the efforts of the government to care for invalids, widows, and orphans is a duty incumbent upon all Christians. An acknowledgment of the justice of the social revolution and the righteousness of the effort to unify the workers of the world for the purpose of defending the rights of the working and exploited man, was likewise to be counted essential.

In the third place, a reform of the liturgical forms of church life should comprise a survey of all liturgical literature of the church with the view of determining and eliminating such parts as were incorporated into it during the reign of the ober-procurors and of the tsarist monarchy; furthermore, liberty of liturgical creativity in the field of worship must be assured and encouraged. Elimination of rites which were clearly a survival of the former pagan concepts was likewise included. A struggle with superstitions which grew up among the ignorant masses, or were deliberately fostered by monkish exploitation of their credulity, was another item of the program. Coöperation of the laity in the service of worship concluded the list of liturgical reforms.

The canonical reforms proposed by the group were directed to rescinding such rules and canons as had either outgrown their usefulness by reason of the altered conditions, or which had been superimposed by the dictates of the former tsarist authorities. The final section of the program dealt with the parochial reform, which included these points: the pastor of each

individual congregation was to be elected by the congregation; the lay membership was to have a part in the disposition of the church collections, along with the clergy; the lay people were to have equal responsibility for the nurture of the young in Christian principles of living along with the clergy. The program also advocated a reinstitution of the office of deaconess, and made an especially important and revolutionary demand for the eligibility of married presbyters for the episcopal office, which must cease to bear the character of despotic absolutism, as it had developed in Russia under the influence of the autocratic tsarist régime. The supreme, as well as the eparchial, administrative offices must be constituted in a representative manner, having members from the episcopate, the lower clergy, and the laymen; all these three groups should enjoy equal rights. Finally, the program demanded the liberation of the parochial clergy from the humiliating dependence upon the richer peasantry, by developing the sense of responsibility for the clergy on the part of the entire congregation.[26]

As for the methods and means by which the program was to be carried out, the conference urged that every member should attempt to spread these ideals in sermons, lectures, discussions, disputations, as well as by literary activity in papers, periodicals, and books. They also proposed the holding of local and national conferences and congresses, by means of which they wished to influence public opinion as well as the government.

As already stated in the program, the group decided to free the church from the hierarchial control of

[26] The full program published in the official organ, *The Living Church,* No. 10, Oct. 1, 1922, pp. 17-18.

the monastic episcopate, in which it saw the chief prop of the ancient régime in the ecclesiastical as well as the political spheres. The new episcopate was to be chosen equally from the white, married clergy and the monastic; but the reformed episcopate would play the chief rôle no longer: the supreme authority in the reconstituted church should be synodical, or collegiate, in form, and all three grades, the episcopate, clergy, and laymen, should share equally in the exercise of power. But since the white clergy would of necessity predominate in any such combination, that group should wield the preponderating influence.

In the relations of the church with the state, the *Living Church* group proposed to reverse the policy of Tikhon, and to reinstate peaceful, and even amicable, relations with the authorities by a hearty acknowledgment of the October Revolution, and "the truth" of the socialistic ideal as essentially Christian. Therefore, willingly accepting the fundamental principle of separation of the church from the state, and secularization of the state, with the consequent non-interference of the church in politics, the *Living Church* group declared that the sphere of action of the church was solely that of purely spiritual functions, as well as the elimination of exploitation, inequality, social injustice, and other social evils. In as far as these common objectives were shared by both the church and the Soviet state, the *Living Church* group acknowledged its sympathy with the attempt of the government to remove such evils and to bring about a betterment of the living conditions of the poor; but beyond this, even the *Living Church* recognized certain limits in approving the policy of the government. Nevertheless, even this measure of solidarity and

acknowledgment earned the *Living Church* the opprobrious epithet of the "Soviet" or the "Red" church.[27]

The various items of the growing list of reforms were not merely enunciated as a theoretical ideal, but were acted upon. Thus, for instance, the pet project of the group to affirm the equal right of the white, married clergy with the monastic to eligibility for the episcopal post was carried into practice when the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, without waiting for the Sobor to pass upon this really important question, conferred the episcopal ordination upon a married priest, Al'binsky, without requiring him to assume the monastic vows.[28]

In spite of the fact that the *Living Church* group had a clearly defined platform, it did not formally organize itself as a church party till the end of June, when it held its third public meeting. The gathering threatened to end in a riot, for when Bishop Antonin announced to the masses the reformist program, the lay audience, especially the women, broke out into open threats and protests. After the public meeting, the clerical delegates adopted a constitution embodying all the essential points of the May program.[29] Moreover, the party organized itself formally by electing a central administrative and executive committee, with a presidium, of which Archpriest Vladimir D. Krasnitsky was the head.

But the most important event since the abdication of Patriarch Tikhon was the holding of the All-Russian Conference of the *Living Church* group, which met in the beautiful cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow,

[27] Titlinov, *The New Church,* Moscow, 1923, pp. 10-12.
[28] *Izvestiya,* No. 132, June 16, 1922.
[29] *Ibid.,* No. 141, June 28, 1922.

from August 6 to 16. The number of eparchies represented amounted to twenty-four, and the meeting comprised one hundred and ninety delegates, of whom one hundred and fifty had the right to vote. Krasnitsky was elected chairman. But instead of unifying the reformist forces, as was confidently expected of the conference, so many divergent views came into evidence that finally the discord resulted in splitting the movement into several smaller units. One tendency saw the goal of the reformist endeavors in a moderate program of extricating the church from the difficult position into which the policies of Patriarch Tikhon had plunged it, and sought to accomplish this without provoking a crisis or disruption within the church; another tendency, more revolutionary and radical, pronounced a struggle of the white clergy for the episcopal control, by overthrowing the unique privileges of the monastic order in this regard, to be the chief task of the reformist movement. Most of the discussion of the conference centered about this latter point, and resulted in the adoption of a resolution according to which the city monasteries and convents were to be closed and turned into parochial churches, on the score that monks by their very profession have no place in the turmoil of life; as for the country monasteries, they were to be transformed into brotherhood centers engaged in some useful humanitarian work, such as clinics, homes for invalids or retired clergymen, and other such useful social service.[30]

Discussing the functions of the so-called "learned monks," the conference concluded that most of the seminarists who take the vows were motivated by

[30] Report of the conference, in *The Living Church,* No. 8-9, Sept. 1-15, 1922, pp. 7-8.

vulgar career-making, and pronounced the entire institution "an evil." In this same connection, the conference adopted these tremendously weighty conclusions:

1. That the *Living Church* group should demand at the next Sobor that Patriarch Tikhon be deprived of his clerical orders, because he bears the chief guilt for the present disorganization of the church.
2. That the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration be petitioned to order an immediate cessation of the mention of his name in the liturgical services in all parishes of the Russian Orthodox church, as of one who no longer holds office.[31]

Moreover, all ecclesiastical superiors found guilty of exerting their hierarchial authority in a manner detrimental to the *Living Church* policies, as well as those opposing the progressivist movement by passive noncoöperation, should be deposed and banished from their former eparchies; in case that opposition to the progressivist priest should come from his local church council, the eparchial administration should be instructed by the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration to depose such a council, and the local parish thereupon should "send a list of the new candidates for the parochial council composed of persons who have preserved canonical obedience (rule 56) to their priest. Persons manifesting opposition shall be handed over to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and sentenced to ecclesiastical punishments to the extent of excommunication from the church."[32] What apt pupils of the Bolshevist methods these priestly revolutionaries were!

[31] *The Living Church*, No. 8-9, 1922, p. 8.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Since the whole *Living Church* movement represented a revolt of the white parochial clergy against the age-long preëmption of the hierarchical offices by the monks, with the consequent autocratic control of the white clergy by the black—or the regular clergy, as we would say in the West—it is no wonder that this problem of snatching the control from their hands greatly exercised the ingenuity of the "whites." They felt, in the first place, that long-established usage and tradition was against them. Many Protestants fail to understand and appreciate the state of mind, bordering upon holy horror, with which most Russians would contemplate the possibility of married bishops. At no point is the conservative traditionalism of the average Russian more apparent than at this. All these difficulties were duly appreciated by the conference, which, therefore, was particularly concerned to prove its case: in long and learned disquisitions, the speakers presented voluble and tedious arguments, the burden of which was that the ancient apostolic church possessed a married episcopate, and the same practice was long preserved in the Eastern church. The conference finally voted that:

1. On the basis of the fifth and fifty-first rules, the holy Apostles permit married presbyters to assume the episcopal office.
2. On the basis of the practice of the ancient church, of the third rule of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and of the tenth rule of the Council of Ancyra, widowed priests are permitted to contract a second marriage and to retain their office.
3. On the basis of the same rules, monastic clergy are permitted, upon abjuring their vows, to marry, still retaining their office.[33]

[33] *Ibid.*, No. 8-9, Sept. 1-15, 1922.

When the conference was presented with the report of the episcopal commission, it was found that, out of the ninety-seven bishops who were serving at the time of the conference, thirty-seven were counted partisans of the *Living Church,* thirty-six were opposed to it, and twenty-four adopted the wary policy of watchful waiting. The conference voted that bishops antagonistic to the group must be retired, and the prudent middle class must be confronted with a definite choice of alternatives: either acknowledge the program of the *Living Church,* or pronounce themselves partisans of the patriarch. Thereupon they would be dealt with accordingly. The commission likewise nominated, out of the married archpriests, six candidates for vacancies in episcopal sees. It is interesting to note that five of the bishops present signified their willingness to ordain these married clerics.[34]

Finally, the conference proceeded with elections to the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, for which twenty members were chosen: five bishops, twelve priests, one deacon, and two laymen. The Central Executive Committee of the *Living Church* was composed of twenty-five members. Thereupon, on August 16, this important gathering was adjourned.

Before its adjournment, the conference adopted an address to the people, which recounted the charges against the patriarch and described the policies of the new administration. As such, it is worth quoting:

You all well know in what a difficult position our Orthodox Russian church finds itself. From the time of establishment of the autocracy in Russia, the church was its chief mainstay, and gradually losing its purely spiritual character, in the end served not so much

[34] *Ibid.,* No. 8-9, Sept. 1-15, 1922, p. 10.

religious as political objectives, transforming itself, especially in its supreme monastic administration, into a servitor and slave of the government. The white clergy, both city and country, lower clergy and the lay membership, suffered threefold oppression: of the tsarist government, of the supreme ecclesiastical government, which was in collusion with the capitalists, and entirely dominated the Orthodox churches and managed them, as well as the pastors and the lower clergy, according to their own base pleasure; the churches, were magnificently decked out, but became, so to speak, soulless, and while satisfying the vanity of the rich, afforded less and less spiritual comfort and peace to the sorrowful and heavy-laden.

The October Revolution freed the church from the heavy yoke of the government of property-owners, separating it from the state, and by that action, granting it the freedom of spiritual development and perfection; but our hierarchs, those "princes of the church," closely bound by their comfortable and easy-going lives to the tsarist government, did not, in reality, desire such a liberation, since it was not for their advancement, but only in the interest of the white, parochial clergy, lower orders, and the lay membership. Hence it is fully intelligible why they unanimously opposed the separation of the church from the state, and represented this necessary and salutary action of the civil government to the white clergy, lower orders, and all the faithful of Russia as persecutions of the church and of the faith in Christ. Regardless of the fact that many of them long before the Russian socialistic revolution foresaw its inevitableness and its full justice, as well as the inevitable union of the workers of the world in defense of the worker's and of the exploited man's rights against capitalism, that worst kind of atheism, they, those hierarchs of ours, when it in the meanwhile was

realized in Russia, instead of recognizing the accomplished fact as a fully natural happening, caused by an age-long arbitrariness of the absolute rule of the propertied classes, not only refused to do so, but, on the contrary, suppressed the truth and joined the enemies of the Russian nation in obstructing in all kinds of ways the establishment of the new order in our native land. Five years of civil war, heavy sacrifices borne by our families, enormous economic upheaval, millions of the sons of Russia killed and wounded in that war—all these are the fruits of the criminal treason against the Russian working people which our Orthodox hierarchs committed by siding with the national enemies. In the armies of Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel, Rodzyanko, Yudenin, and the other robbers who were cruelly plundering the Russian land and who one after another escaped abroad with the plundered property of the Russian people, they, our hierarchs, occupied honorary places, violently took part in the plundering, all the while excusing and blessing the atrocious lawlessness. To crown it all, last winter they gathered themselves at Karlovtsi, together with the runaway owners and prominent officials of the former tsarist régime, and engaged in instigating popular uprising and a new civil war under the guise of guarding church treasures which were consigned to aid those who were dying of starvation. Our supreme pastors, with Patriarch Tikhon at their head, in order to preserve in our Orthodox churches gold, silver, and precious objects, falsely expounded the canons, caused disturbance among the faithful, and instigated commotion, local revolts, and bloodshed.

These sad manifestations caused the cup of patience of the true sons of the Russian Orthodox Church to overflow, and forced them to adopt revolutionary measures for renewing the church on the basis of gospel principles and apostolic traditions. This great

task is to be carried out by the impending All-Russian Local Sobor, the difficult task of preparing for which the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration has taken upon itself.

A large number of our best hierarchs, such as Metropolitan Sergei of Vladimir, Archbishop Evdokim of Nizhni Novgorod, Serafim of Kostroma, Tikhon of Voronezh, and many other hierarchs of our church, hastened to confirm by their acknowledgment the complete canonicity and legality of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, and now in every way coöperate in its difficult task with the party of the white Orthodox clergy, the *Living Church!*[35]

The conference was intrinsically of great importance for the furthering of the policies of the group opposed to Tikhon's reign; but as a means of unification of the divergent methods of reform, it proved to be a signal failure. In fact, the ruthless imposition of the program of Krasnitsky's faction upon the entire conference, and the unwillingness to modify it essentially by the suggestions and programs of the other tendencies, resulted in a split of the reformist forces. The more moderate party within the conference found itself unable to stem the high-handed policy of the ecclesiastical revolutionaries, for it did not approve of the undemocratic and dictatorial method of procedure adopted by the majority. The minority decided, therefore, after the conclusion of the conference, to organize itself separately. At the head of the seceding faction was the same Bishop Antonin who had such a long revolutionary record and who had headed the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration. On August

[35] Titlinov: *The New Church,* pp. 17-20.

20, this party organized itself into a reformist group which assumed the name of the *Churchly Regeneration,* and adopted a platform which in brief outline included these items:

The group defined its aim as that of a return to the early apostolic democratic conception of life, and of equalization of it in accordance with the principles of brotherhood and liberty, by eliminating and purging away every vestige of clericalism and sacerdotalism introduced during the ages of ignorance and darkness and of the autocratic hierarchical administrative tyranny which was but a reflex of the tsarist despotism.

In pursuance of these fundamentally democratic objectives, the group proposed to work for the enlightenment of the dense masses of the Russian church-membership by means of religious education and diffusion of spiritual culture, by spiritualization of worship, simplification of the ritual, elimination of much of the outward ceremonial show which was deemed detrimental to the inward meaning of Christianity, and by removal of the many pagan elements of magic from the cult, as well as by opposing the unscrupulous religious exploitation of the ignorant masses carried on by fostering their superstitious fears or their leanings upon the miraculous.

The group professed its loyalty to and solidarity with the true Christian ideals of all times (catholicity), but where these ideals were corrupted by the corrosive influence of the tsarist despotism or ignorance of the times, they must be restored to their pristine purity. In regard to the eligibility of the white clergy to episcopacy, the group shared the attitude of the *Living Church* in so far as it conceded equal rights

of both the white and the black clergy; but it sharply differed from the *Living Church* in insisting that the bishop must be unmarried.

The group likewise acknowledged the principle of a free election of the priests by their congregations, and professed its rejection of the opposite principle of appointments by ecclesiastical hierarchy. As for monasticism, it was acknowledged as a system of spiritual heroism, a voluntary retirement from the turmoil of life for the purpose of concentrating upon the cultivation of the inner life of the heart and of perfection of the spiritual life; but its use for purposes of attainment of hierarchial power and a life of ease was severely denounced. The group likewise acknowledged the right of the monk to abandon the monastery and the concomitant vow, but held, in distinction from the *Living Church,* that every regular cleric who abandons his monastery *ipso facto* ceases to be a priest as well as a monk.

The chief difference between the *Living Church* and the *Churchly Regeneration* lay in the fact that the former was predominantly a professional, clerical organization, struggling almost exclusively for a program of betterment of the position of the white clergy, especially at the corresponding curtailment of the unjust privileges of the monastic hierarchy. But being a clerical organization, and especially because of the autocratic spirit which characterized the group, it did not enjoy the support of the masses of the people. On the other hand, the *Churchly Regeneration* group was consciously bidding for the peasant support by its program of democratization, but at the same time it was less radical in the treatment of the age-long traditional concepts of religious life and churchly government.

It is not surprising, therefore, that at first the group had a remarkable success; many Moscow priests and thousands of laymen joined its ranks, and the Petrograd contingent of the *Living Church* joined the new movement *en masse.* Other cities likewise contributed their share; thus, at first, the prospects of the new organization were bright.[36]

The other chief defection from the ranks of the *Living Church* was led by another great leader of the original secession movement in opposition to Tikhon, Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky. This fiery orator, one of the most outstanding men in the entire movement, became dissatisfied with many things that were included in the program of the *Living Church,* but much more with the omission of certain other reforms. These were largely of dogmatic character. The name which this group assumed was that of the *Ancient Apostolic Church.*

It will be remembered that, originally, the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, almost immediately upon assuming office, made public declarations that the second local Sobor would be called in the near future, naming August as the probable time. However, as time went on, the leaders began to realize that it would be very risky and hence inadvisable to convene the Sobor so soon, for it was very probable, and in fact certain, that the majority of the hierarchy then holding eparchial appointments were not friendly to the *Living Church,* and hence this group was in imminent danger of losing its power. The only possible way to insure victory to the program which they professed, and incidentally to retain the power in their own hands, was by displacing all who were known

[36] Titlinov, *The New Church,* pp. 21ff.

openly to oppose the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, and to force the cautious, non-committal center to the choice of an open stand; thereupon to fill the vacancies thus occasioned with stanch supporters of the new ecclesiastical régime. As was observed, that was exactly the program adopted at the August conference of the *Living Church,* and the ruthless measures devised for the execution of the policy astounded and repelled even some of the party members themselves.

The best and most candid avowal of this policy of "purgation of the church" was that expressed by Vladimir N. L'vov, the former revolutionary oberprocuror of the Holy Synod under the Provisional Government, who had been elected, shortly before the August conference, to membership in the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration. In a long interview reported in the *Izvestiya,*[37] L'vov pointed out the disastrous outcome of the Sobor of 1917, from which such great and far-reaching reforms had been expected, and traced the cause of the disappointment to the conservative and in part even reactionary character of the majority of the then ruling hierarchy. Hence, before any reforms could be seriously considered at present, the church must be first of all purged of all its reactionary elements, for thus alone would it be possible to introduce a reformatory spirit into it. It would be useless, therefore, to contemplate the convening of the second Sobor until this preliminary work is done. First, it is necessary to purge the ranks of the ecclesiastical office-holders; the Sobor which would then be convened would be sure to take the desired reforms in hand.

[37] No. 171, Aug. 2, 1922.

The government, L'vov continued, is duty-bound to interest itself in church affairs, in spite of the decree separating the church from the state, because the church represents the last front against the new governmental régime. As the government was able, step by step, to crumble all other fronts, the reactionary political leaders had taken refuge in the church, which now is the last front to be overcome. For that reason it is incumbent upon the government to purge the church, especially the parochial councils, of these reactionary elements; "the principle of the separation of the church from the state, if at present put into practice in its entirety, would mean a surrender to the church front. That principle can be realized only in case the church does not interfere in the realm of politics, but in revolutionary times the realization of such a principle to the fullest degree is not possible."

The purgation of the church of its reactionary elements can be accomplished only in one way: by the expulsion of such individuals from their official posts. First of all, it would involve retirement of hierarchs opposed to the reform, and the vacancies thus occasioned would be filled from the ranks of the adherents of the new tendency; secondly, the parochial councils must likewise be constituted from men who represent the believing Russian nation, and not merely from the *Black Hundred* elements.

It is not necessary to fear, L'vov is further quoted to have said, that this change of personnel would lead to a new schism; the reforms involve neither the dogmas of the church nor its rites. The only measure necessitating a change of the former accustomed order is the eligibility of the white clergy to the episcopal posts; but this is absolutely necessary.

After the reactionary elements are removed from the hierarchal cathedras and the parochial councils are purged, then is the time to call the Sobor. Otherwise, the new Sobor is certain to fail of accomplishing what is expected of it, just as the former Sobor had done.

And now follows a very interesting paragraph, which it is, therefore, better to quote verbatim:

You are interested to know in what particular the government is to coöperate in ecclesiastical matters. That coöperation must show itself in the support of the reformist movement. The reactionary elements must feel that the governmental authorities will not be indifferent to abandoning to them their positions. It would be strange if the authorities remained indifferent when reactionary elements wish to make the church a weapon against the government. Not a single European government would permit an ecclesiastical organization to be converted into agitation-units against itself.

We are sincerely grateful to Mr. L'vov for such plain speaking. His statements make it perfectly clear, if it were not already clearly manifest from the pronouncements of the August conference, that the *Living Church* meant to undertake a forcible "purgation" of the church, and that it meant to remove all who did not agree with its party slogans; in this undertaking, such official representatives of the Supreme Administration as L'vov did not scruple to admit publicly that the aid of the government would be desired. The outcome of such measures could be nothing else than a schism, and it is amazing that L'vov did not see it. The forcible ejection of so large and powerful majority opposing the new movement would necessarily put these elements on the defensive, and their

ranks would be swollen by those who were constrained to choose between the two camps by the importunate insistence of the revolutionary leaders.

As an illuminating commentary upon this kind of despoiling program, one reads in the official organ of the *Living Church* of one case after another of "retirement" of this or that bishop or other high ecclesiastical functionary. The least that any one of the undesirable bishops experienced was to be transferred to some other eparchy, where his chances for causing mischief would be correspondingly lessened. It was possibly with such a motive that even Bishop Leonid, the only person to be found among the personnel of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration whom Patriarch Tikhon had appointed and even him only temporarily, was transferred to far-away Penza, in order to make room for the head of the Supreme Administration, Bishop Antonin, who was promoted to the metropolitanate of Moscow.[38] As for all the cases of "retirement" of various bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, they are too numerous to mention; but almost every issue of the official organ carried such ominous lists.

[38] *Izvestiya,* No. 152, July 11, 1922.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIAN LOCAL SOBOR

THE second local Sobor of the Russian Orthodox church, which was preceded by such assiduous "purgation" of the episcopal cathedras and the parochial councils, was finally called, "by the canonically legal ecclesiastical authority," for February 1, 1923; but then it was again postponed till April 29. This most important church gathering since the adjournment of the first Sobor in 1918 was attended by four hundred and thirty delegates, which was a greater number than the first Sobor mustered; they were distributed, according to group allegiance, as follows: the *Living Church* had the largest contingent, in fact an absolute majority in the Sobor, by claiming two hundred and fifty delegates; next came the group of Alexander Vvedensky, the *Ancient Apostolic Church,* with one hundred and ten delegates; then followed the group of Metropolitan Antonin, the *Churchly Regeneration,* with twenty-five delegates to the Sobor. Thus all in all, the three groups of the reformist movement could muster three hundred and eighty-five delegates out of the total of four hundred and thirty.[1] The remaining forty-five delegates comprised adherents of the patriarchal contingent, but their minority action could impede no action which the reformist groups wished to pass. The Eastern patriarchs were also represented.

[1] *Izvestiya,* No. 117, May 30, 1923.

An earlier report regarding the personnel of the Sobor specified that there were ten delegates from the Free Labor Church,[2] but these were denied the right to vote, and attended only as guests.

A word of explanation is in order regarding the astounding fact that the reformist groups were so securely in power when the second Sobor was convened. It will be remembered, however, that the "purgations" of the church had now been going on for more than six months, and that would partly account for the really remarkable phenomenon; furthermore, many leaders of the patriarchal party, as that portion which opposed the activity of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration may be called from now on, insisted that the calling of the Sobor itself was illegal, uncanonical, because the Sobor of 1917-18 provided that the next Sobor should be called and presided over by the patriarch, and since that was not the case in this instance, they refused to take part in it, and counseled others to abstain from voting for it. Finally, a very considerable number of the hierarchs of the patriarchal party were in prison, or in exile, or had left the country, while the great majority of the rest were disqualified by the conditions governing the eligibility of the candidates. These three were the chief causes accounting for the smallness of the delegation from the patriarchal party. It would, however, appear from an examination of the questionaire sent to the delegates chosen to the Sobor that there was no unfairness in the treatment of the delegates, or forcible expulsion of any delegates, no matter what their ecclesiastical or political allegiance was.

The official instructions of February 1, 1923, issued

[2] Cf. *Izvestiya,* No. 93, May 5, 1923.

by the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration and prescribing the rules of order in the selection of candidates for the Sobor, give a fair idea of the mode of procedure adopted for this purpose. In the first place, the instructions defined the aim for which the national Sobor was convened as that of "transforming the Russian Orthodox Church into conformity with the new conditions." All members of the Sobor, whether clergy or laymen, and whether elected or holding a seat by reason of their office, possessed equal rights; the only individuals not eligible for election as delegates were those who during the period in which the reformist movement was in power were sentenced either by the ecclesiastical or the civil courts. Of course, this disposed of practically all the outstanding personalities of the patriarchal party. But otherwise, all members of the Orthodox church possessed the right of forming groups for the purpose of electing delegates who would represent the particular interests of their groups. In electing delegates, regular (monastic) clergy were counted on an equality with the white, parochial clergy, while monks who did not possess clerical ordination were regarded as on an equality with laymen.

The selection of delegates was made from three different electorates: the parish, the diocese, the eparchy, and by the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration. In the parishes, all members eighteen years of age, including both men and women, possessed the franchise. Each parish elected as many lay delegates, either men or women, as there were parochial clerics, but in no case less than three. The election was by a mere majority, and the instructions specified that it would take place on March 25.

The diocesan electoral constituency consisted of all

the diocesan clergy and the delegates who had been elected by the parishes, and elected five delegates: three priests and two laymen. The same applied to the eparchial elections, which were constituted from those who had been elected by the lower ecclesiastical bodies, such as diocesan electorates, and other such bodies, and this body elected directly for the Sobor; it sent its bishop and four delegates, consisting of two clerics and two laymen. The latter election was carried on in the presence of a member of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, who had the right to protest against the program of any group or against any individual, but the final judgment in the case belonged to the eparchial body. The voting proper was really not for individual candidates, but for party programs; the delegates then were assigned in proportion to the number of votes cast for each party program.

In addition to the elective mode of choosing the delegates, the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration possessed the right to seats in the Sobor by virtue of its office, and this provision comprised the entire *plenum;* the same was true of the Ecclesiastical Administrations of Siberia and the Ukraine. The Supreme Administration, moreover, had the privilege of appointing twenty-five other members at its discretion, and a substitute for any elected delegate who for any reason found it impossible to attend the Sobor. It also invited the representatives of other Eastern Orthodox churches, and granted them the right to vote; besides, the central committees of the reformist groups were permitted to hold a place in the Sobor on the same basis. The Russian church outside of Russia was permitted six representatives; non-Orthodox Christian communions, Old Ritualists, and sectarians could also

be invited to attend, but had no vote. The conformist eparchies had the right to send two representatives from each eparchy.[3] Such, then, were the instructions and general regulations for the selection of delegates for the Sobor; it would seem that the privileges of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration were rather generous than otherwise, for the proportion of delegates holding seats by reason of office or by appointment of the Supreme Administration, to the delegates regularly elected, must have been considerable.

The sessions of this most important ecclesiastical gathering were held in that heart of the reformist movement, the church of Christ the Savior, in Moscow, and opened on April 29, 1923. On the platform sat the president of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, metropolitan of Moscow, Antonin; next to him were Metropolitan Peter of Siberia and Metropolitan Tikhon of Kiev. The service was begun by a solemn liturgy, followed by prayer, whereupon the Sobor was pronounced officially opened by Metropolitan Antonin, who greeted it with a short address. Following this, an address to the government embodying a profession of loyalty and a whole-hearted acceptance of the decree separating the church from the state was voted.

The second session, held on May 2, in the former Third Seminary building, was likewise presided over by Metropolitan Antonin, who, however, soon turned it over to Metropolitan Peter. The first action of the Sobor consisted of the election of the presidium, which comprised practically all the leaders of the three reformist groups. Then the presiding metropolitan, now Peter, presented the Sobor with the rules of pro-

[3] The instructions copied from the official archives of the Holy Synod.

cedure, and after these formalities were disposed of, greetings which were sent by mail or wire were read, and oral greetings brought by representatives of the groups were delivered. Vvedensky, in behalf of the *Ancient Apostolic Church,* offered a resolution for adoption by the Sobor which was highly complimentary to the government and its head, Lenin. The resolution read as follows:

The second Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church, having begun its labors, expresses its gratitude to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee for the permission granted to the elected sons of the church to meet in order to deliberate upon the current problems. At the same time with these expressions of gratitude the Sobor presents its respects to the supreme executive of the Workers-Peasants' government and the world-leader, V. I. Lenin.

The great October Revolution has carried into life the great principles of equality in labor which are found in Christian teaching. All the world over the strong strangle the weak. Only in Soviet Russia war has begun against that social lie.

The Sobor affirms that every honorable Christian should take his place among these warriors for humanitarian truth, and use all means to realize in life the grand principles of the October Revolution.

To Vladimir Il'ich (Lenin) the Sobor wishes a speedy recovery, so that he may again become the leader of the warriors for the great social truth.[4]

This resolution was adopted unanimously. One is somewhat curious to know what those forty-five delegates of the patriarchal party were thinking about

[4] This, as well as all following quotations relative to the Sobor, are taken from the official *Acts of the Second All-Russian Local Sobor of the Orthodox Church,* published May 2, 1923.

when they voted for this resolution. Or might it be suggested that perhaps the official minutes recording the unanimous vote might be called in question?

Among other greetings, it is of interest to note that one came from the American Methodist Episcopal Church, North, which body was represented by its Parisian bishop, Dr. Edgar Blake, and the editor of *Zion's Herald,* Dr. L. O. Hartman. Dr. Blake pointed out in his speech that to his mind the reformist movement attested the birth of a new life in the church of Russia. Russia was the first to make it its task to serve the downtrodden classes. The rôle of the church in this great service may be significant, and the church "should go hand in hand with those who protect the interests of the downtrodden masses."[5] Bishop Blake was chosen by the Sobor an honorary member of that body. It may be remarked here, although it is out of its chronological place, that he and Dr. Hartman were so deeply impressed with the needs of the Russian church, especially in the matter of educating its future ministry, that together they underwrote the educational program of the church for fifty thousand dollars, to be raised in America during the next three years. This fund was to enable the church to open a theological academy in Moscow for the training of priests, for it was estimated that three thousand five hundred priests were needed annually to fill up the vacancies. As no such school had existed hitherto (since the October Revolution in 1917), this was to be the beginning of a renewed educational program in the Russian church. In order

[5] *Acts,* p. 4.

to defend himself against his many critics, Bishop Blake explicitly stated that "none of our denominational Boards are involved. Not even the Methodist Church is responsible for this gift. Only Dr. Hartman and myself, who made the pledge, and Bishop Nuelson, who approved it, are responsible for it. The obligation and the burden are ours alone, and having gone forward, we shall not turn back." [6]

The most dramatic as well as important of the sessions of the Sobor was held on May 3, when the case of Patriarch Tikhon came up for action. The official *Acts* give a long series of "theses" which presumably were the points in the speeches reviewing the activity of the patriarch and presenting the arguments for his deposition. One cannot but wish that the secretary had rather given us the actual proceedings, to enable us to form a clear idea of the progress of the important session step by step. Such a description of the trial does not appear in the minutes. In fact, there really was no trial in the proper sense of that word. In the first place, Patriarch Tikhon was not present, for he was at the time still in prison; he was not even represented by counsel, and doubtless, had he been cited before the tribunal of the Sobor, he would have refused to appear. Such trials have usually been regarded as uncanonical by the church, and there is not the slightest occasion for surprise when we find that to have been exactly the attitude of a considerable numerical majority of the church after the patriarch's release from prison.

The official minutes, then, after stating the "theses" against Tikhon, go on to inform us that the hierarchical

[6] *The Christian Work,* Aug. 4, 1923.

council at the Sobor passed the following resolution regarding the patriarch:

After adjudicating the activity of Patriarch Tikhon, the episcopal council came to the unanimous decision that Patriarch Tikhon is subject, before the conscience of the believers, to the heaviest penalty: to the punishment of deprivation of his clerical orders and of his patriarchal office, because he has directed all his powers of moral and ecclesiastical authority toward the overthrowing of the existing civil and social order of our life, and thus brought into jeopardy the very existence of the church.[7]

This resolution was signed by four metropolitans, Antonin, Nicholas of Kharkov, Peter of Siberia, and Tikhon of Kiev; twenty-six archbishops, and twenty-four bishops—fifty-four hierarchs altogether. But since the official report itself lists sixty-six bishops (leaving out Archbishop Alexander Vvedensky, who was elevated to the episcopacy a day later), it is evident that twelve bishops must have refused to sign the decision; but this is not definitely specified.

Thereupon, after an impassioned speech delivered by Vvedensky, which according to one report lasted two and one-half hours, the presiding metropolitan offered the following resolution:

Having heard the report of Archpriest A. Vvedensky, the All-Russian Local Sobor of the Orthodox Church witnesses before the church and before all mankind that at present the world has become divided into two classes: capitalists-exploiters, and the proletariat, by whose toil and blood the capitalistic world builds its prosperity. No one in the world but the Soviet government of Russia has undertaken a struggle against this

[7] *Acts*, p. 6.

social evil. Christians cannot remain indifferent spectators of that struggle. The Sobor declares capitalism to be a mortal sin, and the fight against it to be sacred for Christians. The Sobor sees in the Soviet government the world leader toward fraternity, equality, and international peace. The Sobor denounces the international and domestic counter-revolution, and condemns it with all its religious and moral authority.

The Sobor calls upon every honest Christian citizen of Russia to go forth to battle, in united front, under the guidance of the Soviet government, against the world-evil of social wrong.

The Holy Sobor of 1923 of the Orthodox Church, having deliberated on the condition of the church during the time of the revolution, has resolved:

1. Beginning with the summer of 1917, responsible leaders of the church assumed a definitely counter-revolutionary point of view. The church must reëstablish the unity of the tsarist Russia—such was the slogan which the church chose to follow (having been so closely bound with tsarism prior to the revolution). The Sobor of 1917, composed largely of representatives of the reactionary clergy as well as of the high nobility, property owners, and members of reactionary political parties, became at the very outset a definitely political counter-revolutionary gathering which merely covered all these actions with the name of Christ the Savior. The Sobor fought against the revolution. It did not recognize even the Provisional Government, and after October this struggle assumed perfectly incredible proportions.

After the meeting of the Sobor, Patriarch Tikhon continued this counter-revolutionary activity. He became the leader and standard-bearer of all opponents of the Soviet government. He drove the church into the counter-revolutionary struggle.

The Holy Sobor of 1923 of the Orthodox Church condemns the counter-revolutionary struggle and its methods, which are the methods of man-hatred. Especially does the Sobor of 1923 deplore the anathematization of the Soviet government and of all who recognize it. The SOBOR DECLARES this anathematization TO HAVE NO FORCE.

2. The Sobor of 1923 condemns all those who have followed this path and persuaded others to follow them. And this applies, first of all, to the responsible leader of our church life, Patriarch Tikhon. Whereas Patriarch Tikhon served the counter-revolution instead of sincerely serving Christ, and, since he is the person who was supposed to direct properly all ecclesiastical life, but as on the contrary he led astray the broad masses of the church, the Sobor regards Tikhon as an apostate from the original commands of Christ and a traitor to the church. On the basis of the canons of the church, it hereby declares him to be DEPRIVED OF HIS CLERICAL ORDERS AND MONKHOOD, AND RELEGATED TO HIS ORIGINAL LAY CONDITION.

HEREAFTER PATRIARCH TIKHON IS LAYMAN BASIL BELAVIN.

3. The representatives of the reformist church movement have severed all connection with the counter-revolution, and have thereby earned for themselves the disapprobation of all reactionary churchmen. The Holy Sobor of 1923 declares that all such interdictory measures have no force whatever. On the contrary, the Sobor approves the courage of these men and their devotion to the church, which they have rescued from the hands of the counter-revolution and are restoring to Christ the Savior.

4. The Holy Sobor urges all churchmen to abandon all attempts to use the church for temporal political schemes, for the church belongs to God and must serve Him only. There must be no place in the church

for counter-revolution. The Soviet government is not a persecutor of the church. In accordance with the constitution of the Soviet government, all citizens are granted genuine religious freedom of conscience. The decree regarding the separation of the church from the state guarantees such freedom. The freedom of religious equally with anti-religious propaganda affords the believers an opportunity to defend by argument the merits of their purely religious convictions. Hence churchmen must not see in the Soviet authority the antichrist; on the contrary, the Sobor calls attention to the fact that the Soviet authority is the only one throughout the world which will realize, by governmental methods, the ideals of the Kingdom of God. Therefore every faithful churchman must not only be an honorable citizen, but also fight with all his might, together with the Soviet authority, for the realization of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

5. Condemning the former patriarch Tikhon as a leader of counter-revolution and not of the church, the Sobor holds that the very restoration of the patriarchate was a definitely political counter-revolutionary act. The ancient church knew no patriarch and was governed conciliarly; hence the Holy Sobor hereby abolishes the restored patriarchate: hereafter the church shall be governed by the Sobor.

6. Condemning counter-revolution within the church, punishing its leaders, abolishing the institution of the patriarchate itself, and recognizing the existing governmental authority, the Sobor creates normal conditions of peaceful progress of ecclesiastical life. Henceforth all church life should be based upon two principles: (1) with respect to God, upon a genuine devotion of church people to the original commands of Christ the Savior; (2) with respect to the government, upon the principle of separation of the church from the state.

Building upon these foundations, the church will become what it ought to be: a loving, laboring company of those who believe in God, his Christ, and his truth.[8]

This was a decision of tremendous, far-reaching importance, and its consequences were disastrous: it meant an irrevocable split within the church. Were there protests against these extreme charges of "apostate" and "traitor" applied to the patriarch? Was it pointed out that the fact the patriarch was being sentenced in his absence, and without the possibility of defending himself, was a serious, possibly invalidating, circumstance which told heavily against the action of the Sobor? How did the members of the patriarchal party vote? How was the vote carried, anyway? All these are questions to which the official *Acts of the Sobor* supply no answer. Incredible though it may seem, there is no record in the *Acts* whether or not the resolution deposing Tikhon and abolishing the patriarchate was carried. Presumably it must have been, because the group which was committed to such an action since August of the preceding year—the *Living Church*—had an absolute majority on its side. Yet, it would have been of importance to know how the rest voted. No matter what we say regarding Secretary Novikov's qualities as an ecclesiastical politician, as a historian, he fails woefully: to record immediately after the resolution above given nothing beyond the laconic, "the session was closed at five o'clock in the evening with the chanting of prayer," is nothing less than failing of one's duty as a secretary. Yet that is all the information the published official *Acts* yield.

The same evening, another measure, no less revolu-

[8] *Acts*, pp. 6-8.

tionary for the church of Russia, was adopted; this was a measure regarding the eligibility of the white priesthood for the episcopal order. After a period of discussion of the subject (during which the only person who opposed the measure, Bishop Leonty of Volhynia, was deprived of the right to speak "because he had not held to his subject"), the measure was finally voted upon in the same order as the previous one, the episcopal council first expressing its judgment upon the matter, after which it was submitted to the entire Sobor for decision. It was quite obvious from the discussions as well as from the decisions themselves that the measure was not dictated by mere theoretical desire "to restore the early practice," but that its mainspring was to be found in the urgent need of the reformist groups to have a like-minded episcopate, a need which the monastic candidates, as a rule, failed to meet. It was, therefore, the practical necessity of having an episcopate which would share the reformist ideals, and thus put them into practical operation in the conduct of church affairs (control of which, of course, was largely in the hands of the hierarchy), that obliged the Sobor to adopt this measure, which in itself could be foreseen as likely to cause a great deal of trouble in the future. The episcopal decision read as follows:

The practice of the Russian church hitherto followed the rule of having an unmarried, and specifically a monastic, episcopacy. During the present revolutionary times a married episcopacy was admitted. The Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration approved of married bishops in Voronezh, and the Episcopal Advisory Council of the Sobor, in its session of May 1, 1923, admitted into canonical fellowship the married episcopate of Siberia. At present, under the urgent

demands of life, the Episcopal Advisory Council of the Sobor rules: not to regard the married state as a bar to the episcopal office, and beginning with May 3, 1923, to admit to it the single, unmarried, as well as the married candidates.

The resolution adopted by the Sobor was supported by more specious references to the canonicity of the action, and exhibited the legal basis upon which it rested:

Following the plain and immutable witness of the Holy Writ (I Timothy iii. 2-4; Titus i. 6-9,) which is the fundamental source of the Christian faith and piety, and in pursuance of the findings of the most ancient memorials of Christian literature, the canons of the holy Apostles (rules 5, 40, 51) and the decisions of the ecumenical and local Sobor (First Ecumenical Council, 17: Carthaginian Council, 4, rules 3, 25, 71; Fourth Ecumenical Council, rule 4); also taking into consideration the practice of the Eastern churches and the Greek church, in which as late as the twelfth century, the married episcopacy was of common occurrence, and finally, taking heed of the contemporary situation in the Russian church, which the monastic episcopate, with a few exceptions, showed itself unsuited to cope with, the Second All-Russian Local Sobor deems it absolutely necessary to admit to the episcopal office the white, married clergy equally with unmarried persons.[9]

The concomitant project of permitting the clergy to marry a second time, which the August conference of the *Living Church* had inserted into its platform, was acted upon the next day, when it was voted to permit a second marriage to priests, but not to bishops;

[9] *Acts*, p. 8.

furthermore, to permit priests to marry widows and divorcees; and finally, to reinstate into priesthood such as were unfrocked on account of having contracted a second marriage. In addition, the Sobor adopted other resolutions of greater or less revolutionary nature and interest, such as the one regarding the relics of the saints, which the government had found, upon official investigation, to have been grossly falsified in many cases and with which astounding frauds were being perpetrated. All such falsifications were severely condemned by the Sobor, which likewise issued instructions as to the method of procedure regarding the matter in the future. The enmity toward the monasteries and monkhood in general, which was the chief characteristic of the *Living Church* group, was very much in evidence when that subject came to be discussed by the Sobor. The legislation finally passed by that body regarding the monastic establishments was correspondingly harsh; it was passed by a majority vote that monasteries should be closed as having abandoned the pure monastic ideal; but their place should be taken by communistic brotherhoods who would work for the uplift of the people. Funrthermore, in accordance with the motion of Metropolitan Antonin, the Sobor unanimously adopted the Gregorian calendar and ruled to put it into execution on June 12, 1923. It will be remembered that the old Russian calendar was thirteen days behind the one in use in the Western countries, and this caused a great deal of inconvenience. This reform was inaugurated simultaneously with the same measure having been adopted by other Eastern Orthodox churches: the Sobor of Athos had adopted it on March 1, 1923, and the patriarch of Constantinople and his Synod had confirmed it on June 15. By

another radical measure, urged by Vvedensky and Krasnitsky, and adopted by the Sobor, it was ruled that on account of the known counter-revolutionary activity of the Russian priesthood and hierarchs outside of Russia, all these members of the Russian clergy were cut off from the church. The members of the Karlovtsi Sobor of 1921 were explicitly named in this resolution.

In the last session of the Sobor, the presidium of the Sobor, in recognition of his great services in behalf of the reformist movement, voted to confer upon Archpriest V. D. Krasnitsky, the head of the *Living Church* group, the great honor of the archbishopric of Petrograd, but for reasons which were not even hinted at in the official *Acts,* that leader energetically refused the tempting offer. Thereupon the Sobor at least conferred upon him the rank of a protopresbyter, which he accepted. The other dominant figure of the reformist movement, Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky, had been elevated, some days before, to the dignity of Metropolitan Krutitsky, which post represents the vicariate of Moscow.

The plenum of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration was likewise organized with the legalizing approval of the Sobor, and comprised eighteen members, of which ten were chosen from the *Living Church* group, with Krasnitsky as their leader; six from the *Ancient Apostolic Church,* with Vvedensky as their head, and two from the *Churchly Regeneration,* the smallest of the groups, of which Metropolitan Antonin, the president of the plenum, retained his leadership. This proportion of representation on the plenum was determined by the relative size of the

groups, and is therefore a good index to the membership of the reformist parties.

The Second Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church closed its sessions on May 9 with solemn services held in the church of Christ the Savior, having accomplished everything that the August conference of the *Living Church* had planned for it. There was no denying the fact that the work accomplished was of a revolutionary character; the dubious canonicity of some of the most outstanding acts of this Sobor, especially the harsh and unjustifiably ruthless condemnation of Tikhon, was sure to be attacked, as the immediate future was to manifest only too amply. On the other hand, it could not be denied that the profuse and ardent professions of loyalty to the government, and the determined and loud condemnation of the former "counter-revolutionary activity" of the church, could not fail to restore in a measure normal relations between the government and the church, which must be appraised as a great gain. The many really good reforms fathered by these groups, considering them apart from the unwise methods of execution, would have been greatly beneficial to the church had they been adopted with the consent of the entire church, instead of being forced by a minority upon an unwilling majority.

But alas, for the plans of mice and men! The utterly unexpected had happened! When everybody expected that Patriarch Tikhon, who had now been imprisoned for about a year, would be brought to trial, the outcome of which could hardly be in question; when the action of the Sobor in deposing him and abolishing the patriarchate rested upon the assumption

that Tikhon needed no longer to be reckoned with; when, in short, Tikhon was looked upon as being as good as dead, the most unexpected thing happened. In the first place, the trial which had been in preparation for a year, and which was announced in the papers as having been set for a certain date for which even admission tickets had been distributed, was then almost at the last moment called off. The reason for this which appeared an inexplicable enigma was not divulged till later, when the papers brought the astounding news that the day before the trial Patriarch Tikhon appealed to the Supreme Court with the following declaration, which has since received the name of Tikhon's "Confession":

Appealing with the present declaration to the Supreme Court of the Russian Soviet Federation of Socialistic Republics, I regard it as my duty, dictated by my pastoral conscience, to declare the following:

Having been nurtured in a monarchist society, and until my arrest having been under the influence of anti-Soviet individuals, I was filled with hostility against the Soviet authorities, and at times my hostility passed from passivity to active measures, as in the instance of the proclamation on the occasion of the Brest-Litovsky peace in 1918, the anathematizing of the authorities in that same year, and finally, the appeal against the decree regarding the removal of church treasures in 1922. All my anti-Soviet acts, with the exception of a few inexactitudes, were stated in the act of accusation drawn up by the Supreme Court. Acknowledging the correctness of the accusations of the Supreme Court and its sentence as conforming to the clauses of the criminal code, I repent of all my actions directed against the government and

petition the Supreme Court to change its sentence and to set me free.

I declare hereby to the Soviet authorities that henceforth I am no more an enemy to the Soviet government, and that I have completely and resolutely severed all connections with the foreign and domestic monarchists and the counter-revolutionary activity of the White Guards.[10]

The publication of this startling declaration, as well as the release of the patriarch from prison consequent upon it, caused, as may well be imagined, an immense amount of stir and diverse comment. The patriarchal party was grievously shocked with the patriarch's declaration, so frankly conceding his share in the anti-governmental activity; adherents of the reformist group were equally perturbed over the possibilities of complications which the release of the patriarch implied. On the part of the former, various attempts were made to explain the patriarch's "confession" as a forgery, or at least as a composition which he was constrained by threats or blandishments to write, or that it was written for him, and he, an old man weakened in health by the rigors of his imprisonment, was inveigled to sign it. But all such hypotheses broke down before the simple, unequivocal acknowledgment of it by the patriarch himself, made several times subsequently. Dr. Julius F. Hecker of Moscow, who had been appointed by the Sobor of 1923 secretary of the educational committee, told the writer personally that he and Bishop Nuelson of the American M. E. Church, North, visited the patriarch some time after his release and questioned him concerning the

[10] *Izvestiya,* No. 141, June 27, 1923.

rumored unauthenticity of his "Confession." Patriarch Tikhon replied to them in clear, unambiguous language that the document was written by himself, and that he was neither forced to write it nor threatened; it was suggested to him by the authorities that he might gain his freedom if he should make some such confession, and he freely complied with that suggestion. Dr. Hecker's own theory was that the evidence against Tikhon was so complete and overwhelming that he knew he could not escape condemnation, and hence availed himself of the offer of the government.

But what could be the reason actuating the government to release the patriarch? What did the government gain? Although never officially stated, the motives need not be regarded as mysterious or unfathomable. On the contrary, it is fairly easy to reconstruct them with a certain degree of confidence. In the first place, the confession of Patriarch Tikhon, in which he voluntarily acknowledged his former counter-revolutionary activity, and sued for mercy, on the basis of his promise to cease his self-confessed hostile activity, was far more valuable for the purposes of the government than a theoretical satisfaction of justice by infliction of the death penalty upon him, even though the government possessed no matter how much of conclusive evidence of the patriarch's guilt. Secondly, the infliction of the death penalty upon the patriarch would have stirred up the outside world to a still more violent prejudice against Russia, as the trial and execution of the Roman Catholic Budkevich had done. The outside pressure, especially such as was exerted by the archbishop of Canterbury through the English government, must have had some weight with the Russian authorities also. Finally, as there was

nothing for the government to gain from the death of Tikhon, they were astute enough to perceive that there were considerable chances of gain in releasing him. A cartoon which appeared about that time in the *Workman's Moscow*[11] may be presumed to interpret correctly the expectations which the authorities cherished: the patriarch is there seen in a violent hand-to-hand struggle with another priest (presumably Krasnitsky, or Antonin), while a grinning workman stands by, his hands in his pockets. The cartoon bears the title: "When two are engaged in a scuffle, the hands of the third are free." The Soviet government, always unfriendly to the church, may be presumed to have foreseen the latent possibilities of conflict which was certain to break out upon the patriarch's release, and there is little reason to suppose that it would have been unwilling to avoid it. Thus the government was certain to gain more than it lost by the release of the patriarch.

Tikhon, of course, ascribed his release to a different, though utterly improbable and even palpably self-contradictory reason. In an interview with a representative of *The Manchester Guardian,* the patriarch was reported to have made the following comment:

> I have never sought to overthrow the government. In 1918, I stood openly against some of its decrees. I am not a counter-revolutionary, in spite of the fact that some of my appeals had an anti-Soviet character. The power of the Soviet government has greatly increased in Russia; and it has undergone various developments. We, the members of the old clergy, are not now struggling against the Soviets, but against the *Living Church.*

[11] July 15, 1923.

What were the causes of your liberation and the change in the attitude of the Soviet government toward you?

I am persuaded that, having studied my case, the government became convinced that I was no counter-revolutionary. It was suggested that I should make a public declaration of the fact, and I wrote a letter to say so.

Unfortunately, this theory of the patriarch conflicts with his own admissions in the "Confession." The first part of the interview, where Tikhon claims to be no counter-revolutionary, may be understood in the sense that at the time he was speaking he no longer was one; but the latter part where he suggests that the authorities became convinced of his non-counter-revolutionary course flatly contradicts such phrases as: "I was filled with hostility against the Soviet authorities"; "Acknowledging the correctness of the accusations of the Supreme Court . . . I repent of all my actions directed against the government," etc. If the latter were not true, why did he freely make those declarations at the time of his release?

His acknowledgment cost the patriarch the loss of the extreme monarchical faction, mostly outside of Russia, which wished to use the church for its political restorationist ends. This émigré clergy had caused him an immense amount of mischievous harm, in discrediting him and the church in the eyes of the government by their unwise pronouncements and propaganda, especially those associated with the Karlovtsi Sobor. Within Russia, the church, as far as the bulk of the people and the clergy were concerned, rallied round him loyally and with enthusiasm.

Almost as soon as he regained liberty, Patriarch Tikhon set about his conflict with the usurping Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, which had been set up the previous year. Taking up his residence again in the Donskoy Monastery, he issued, on July 15, 1923, a public proclamation wherein he stigmatized the entire work of the leaders of the *Living Church* and the other factions as a barefaced usurpation and fraud. This curious document is so valuable as giving Tikhon's version of the events since his imprisonment, that in accordance with the original design of the book it is deemed best to incorporate it in its entirety:

By the Lord's mercy, we, humble Tikhon, patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia, to the most holy episcopate, priests, and honored monks, and to all faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church: God's peace and blessing.

More than a year ago, in consequence of circumstances well known to all, we had been set aside from our pastoral ministry, and have since not been able to stand personally at the helm of the administration to guard the age-hallowed traditions of the church.

Therefore, as soon as circumstances demanded it, we, strictly conforming to the regulations of the Sobor which instituted the rules of patriarchal administration of the Russian church, and in compliance with the resolution of the Holy Synod associated with us, passed on November 7, 1920, considered it advantageous to transfer the fullness of spiritual power, during the time of our retirement from office, to a substitute appointed by ourselves, the metropolitan of Yaroslavl, Agathangel. He was to convoke a second local Sobor of the Russian church for the purpose of ordering the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration and other needs of the church. We had been informed that the civil

authorities were not opposed to it, and Metropolitan Agathangel accepted the task we had charged him with. But for reasons over which he had no control, he could not enter upon the fulfillment of his obligations. Ambitious and self-willed individuals made use of it, and not "entering by the door, but climbing up another way" (John x. 1), they usurped the supreme authority over the Russian Orthodox Church, which did not belong to them.

On May 18 of the previous year, during our imprisonment in the Troitskoe podvor'e, the priests Vvedensky, Belkov, and Kalinovsky (who but a short time before had renounced the holy orders) visited us, and under the pretext of caring for the welfare of the church, presented us with a written statement, wherein they complained that in consequence of the existing circumstances, church business remained unattended to. They begged us to entrust our chancery to them in order that they might properly classify the correspondence received. Considering it a useful measure, we yielded to their solicitation and inscribed their petition with the following resolution:

"The undersigned persons (*i.e.* the priests who had signed the petition) are ordered to take over and transmit to the most holy Agathangel, upon his arrival in Moscow, all the Synodical business, with the assistance of secretary Numerov." On the strength of this resolution they were ordered merely to take over the business and to transmit it to Metropolitan Agathangel as soon as he should arrive in Moscow. We gave them no instructions as to how to deal with the entrusted affairs in case Metropolitan Agathangel should not come to Moscow at all, as we could not at that time foresee that eventuality; moreover, there could be no approval in the resolution of their replacing, in such eventuality, the metropolitan and of placing themselves at the head of the ecclesiastical administration,

because the fullness of power inherent in the episcopal office cannot be transferred to priests. Nevertheless, they pronounced our resolution an act transmitting to them the church government, and, having come to an agreement with Bishops Antonin and Leonid, organized themselves into the so-called Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration. In order to justify their self-willed behavior, they repeatedly insisted, both in print and at public meetings, that they had entered upon the administration of the church by an agreement with the patriarch (*Pravda,* May 21, 1922), and that they were members of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration "in conformity with the resolution of the holy patriarch Tikhon" (Vvedensky: *Revolution and the Church,* p. 28), and that they "have received from the hands of the patriarch himself the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration" (*The Living Church,* 4-5, p. 9). At the meeting held on June 12, 1922, in response to the motion of one of the priests to abstain from any new church reforms without the patriarch's approval, the chairman of the meeting, Bishop Antonin, declared: "As Patriarch Tikhon has transmitted his authority to the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration, without reservations, we have no need to run after him to receive from him what he no longer possesses" (*Izvestiya,* April 16, 1922; No. 132).

Today we solemnly and within the hearing of all testify from the sacred cathedra that all these positive statements as to an agreement with us, and as to the transmission of the rights and obligations of the patriarch of the Russian church to the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration formed by Bishops Antonin and Leonid, and Priests Vvedensky, Krasnitsky, Kalinovsky, and Belkov, are nothing else but lies and fraud, and that the above-named persons have usurped the ecclesiastical government by seizure and arbitrarily, without any legal authorization established by the

rules of our church. Upon all such persons the holy church pronounces a severe judgment. According to article 16 of the Council of Antioch, a bishop who digresses from the lawful order, and arbitrarily invades another bishop's diocese, even though requested by all the people to do so, is degraded from his sacerdotal rank for the sin of infringing the church laws.

Those persons who have organized the self-styled Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration in Moscow, and are on that account guilty in the eyes of the church, have further aggravated their position by ordaining bishops to the unlawfully usurped dioceses, and have incurred thereby censure according to the 35th rule of the holy Apostles, which threatens to deprive any person of the holy orders who ordained, or was himself ordained, in a diocese other than his own. And how have they used the unlawfully usurped ecclesiastical authority? They have used it not for the building up of the church, but in sowing seeds of a destructive schism: in depriving orthodox bishops of their sees for having remained faithful to their duty and for refusing to submit to them; in persecuting the reverend priests, who in accordance with the canons of the church have not submitted themselves to them; they have founded everywhere the so-called "Living Church," which despises the authority of the Ecumenical church and strives to impair the necessary church discipline, in order to secure victory to its own party and to carry out by force its objectives without heeding the voice of the Sobor, representing all the believers. By all these actions they have separated themselves from the body of the Ecumenical church and deprived themselves of God's favor, which resides only in the church of Christ. Consequently, all arrangements made during our absence by those ruling the church, since they had neither legal right nor canonical authority, are non-valid and void, and all actions and sacra-

ments performed by bishops and clergymen who have forsaken the church are devoid of God's grace and power; the faithful taking part in such prayers and sacraments shall receive no sanctification thereby, and are subject to condemnation for participating in their sin.

Our heart has suffered acutely when the sad news about the church disorders which have arisen after our retirement has reached us, as we have heard of the violence exercised by the unauthorized, self-imposed church government; of the rise of party strife; of the spirit of animosity and division reigning where the spirit of love and brotherly unity should have ruled. But as long as we had not regained our liberty, we could do nothing to assist in pacifying the church and allaying the ruinous strife save to pray in the secrecy of our cell. Now since we have been released from prison and have become fully acquainted with the state of church affairs, we again assume the primate's authority which we had temporarily transferred to our substitute, Metropolitan Agathangel, who, however, for reasons over which he had no control, had not been able to exercise it. Resuming the exercise of our pastoral duties, we fervently pray the Master of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us strength and wisdom to govern His church and to instill into it the spirit of peace, love, and concord. At the same time we call upon all bishops, priests, and faithful sons of the church, who remained true to their duty, and have bravely defended the divinely ordained order of the life of the church, begging them to help us in the task of pacifying the church by their advice, their labors, and especially their prayers to the Creator of all and Sustainer, God. We beseech those that, consciously or unconsciously, knowingly or ignorantly, have been seduced by the wiles of the present age, and having acknowledged the unlawful authority, have fallen away from the unity of the church and the grace of God, to

confess their sin, to cleanse themselves by repentance, and to return to the saving bosom of the One Universal church.

May God's blessing and the prayers of His holy mother, the Virgin Mary, and of our fathers, Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Philip, Hermogen, the primates of Moscow and miracle-workers, and all the saints of the Russian land who for ages have been pleasing to God, be with you. Amen.

Humble TIKHON,
Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia.

Moscow, Donskoy Monastery,
July 15, 1923.[12]

[12] Reprinted in the *American Orthodox Messenger,* No. 13, July 30, 1923. (In Russian.)

CHAPTER X

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF

The schism within the Russian church was now an accomplished fact. That which L'vov had contemptuously rejected as an improbability had become a fact. There were two well-defined, mutually hostile camps, each striving for supremacy, each hurling excommunications against the other, each secure in the sense of the righteousness of its own cause. Masses of church people, with the majority of the clergy, rallied round the patriarch almost as soon as he was liberated, and were ready once more to follow his bidding. This surprising turn of events, occasioned largely by a feeling of sympathy for the suffering of the patriarch, who came to be looked upon as a martyr for the cause of the church, confronted the reformist leaders with a problem of the utmost gravity. Reliable witnesses report that their churches soon became deserted, and that the common masses flocked into the churches which hoisted the patriarchal flag. The Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration retained the outward trappings of power, and continued to assert, now a bit too strenuously—as is usually the case with a man conscious of a flaw in his claim—that it was the only legal supreme authority in the church of Russia.

Who, then, was right? Did the patriarch and his party possess superior claims to the supreme office, or was the reformist group in the right? These are ques-

tions of extraordinary difficulty, because so much of the contention of each party is undeniably true, but neither party is wholly right. That the patriarch was guilty of an anti-Soviet policy is beyond all reasonable doubt, for it is abundantly attested to by his own official pronouncements as well as acts, and finally by his own confession; there is no question, either, that the effect upon the church of this policy was most disastrous, and that the appalling toll of arrests and deaths might be largely accounted for as its natural and logical result. Moreover, his own legal position, honestly on the part of some, unfairly on the part of others, has been regarded as questionable, for the Sobor of 1917-18 had ruled, by implication, that the next meeting of the Sobor should be called by the patriarch within the next three-year period,[1] and he as well as the two auxiliary bodies associated with him in governing the church were to give account to this Sobor, and the two associated groups were then, at least partly, to be reappointed. When 1921 came, the patriarch failed to call the Sobor: it is true that conditions were unfavorable, but the patriarch did not even propose to call it, and since then showed no greater interest or zeal in calling it, until he was forced by his own arrest to bestir himself in the matter. There were some individuals

[1] Decision of Dec. 7, 1917, articles 4 and 8, *Regulations about the Supreme and Eparchial Administration of the Orthodox Church*, Warsaw, 1922, pp. 7-8. These articles really refer to the length of the term for which the two bodies associated with the patriarch in administering the church were elected. Article 4 specifies that six out of the twelve of the hierarchial members of the body are elected for three years; article 8 refers to the membership of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council, which "are elected by the All-Russian Sobor for the inter-Sobor period (three years)." The implication of the latter provision, that the Sobors are to be called every three years, is undoubtedly and clearly to that effect; but it is not specifically stated.

in the reformist group who apparently honestly believed that the patriarch's legal tenure of office since 1921 was seriously impaired, and who had precipitously jumped to the conclusion that he no longer possessed the necessary lawful authority to govern the church. It may be that others felt in their heart of hearts that this was but a flimsy and pettifogging pretense, and yet urged it to deceive others into doubting the patriarch's right to the supreme power. However that may have been, the result was the same: these individuals refused to recognize the patriarch's title to his office. But, of course, the strongest and most obvious of reasons against the continuation of the policy hitherto pursued by the patriarch was the ruinous, desperate condition to which the church had been brought under the patriarch's direction: a practical state of civil war existed between the state and the church, in which the latter sustained crushing defeats; the hierarchs and priests were arrested and thrown into prison, suffered in exile, and were being put to death in appalling numbers. The authorities were ruthless in the execution of the laws, and unless the church abandoned its attitude of stubborn, obstinate opposition, it seemed as if utter annihilation were staring it in the face. So it at least appeared to those who disagreed with the patriarch's policy. Could he and his associates, confirmed and convinced opponents of the Soviet régime as they were, be expected to effect any radical change in their policy? Hardly. There was nothing left but to adopt the revolutionary method, and in the interests of preservation of the church—and self-preservation is the first law of nature—to overthrow the existing church government and set up one better fitted to cope with the prevailing situation. This, indeed, was the surest ground on which

the reformist movement could seek justification, and it is difficult, in face of the undoubtedly perilous, in fact almost hopeless, situation into which the patriarch's policy had plunged the church, not to concede its right to revolt. The methods used to overthrow the patriarchal power and to seize supreme direction of affairs were frankly uncanonical, revolutionary: to claim patriarchal sanction for the usurpation of power on the part of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration is to resort to trickery and palpable falsehood, and to jeopardize the acknowledgment of its real rights on a purely revolutionary basis. The patriarch, of course, never dreamed of making the group which came to visit him on May 18 his successors in the supreme office, and to claim it could hardly be understood otherwise than as a conscious deceit and a lie. It is inconceivable that those leaders who made the claim could honestly have believed it. But mere affirmation of the uncanonicity of the movement cannot in the nature of the case be regarded as conclusively condemnatory, for there were obviously much graver issues involved than a mere adherence to ancient canons: the very existence of the church was at stake. To save it, the movement affirmed its moral right to commit an uncanonical action as long as the canonical authorities were hurrying the church to destruction.

The arguments of the patriarchal party that the Sobor of 1923 was uncanonical because it was not called and presided over by the patriarch were answered by a similar insistence on the legal and rightful transmission of the supreme authority by the patriarch to the Ecclesiastical Administration, which as an heir to the patriarchal prerogatives possessed the right to call and

preside at the Sobor. The further objection that the patriarch was not judged by his equals—the Eastern patriarchs—but by those who really were his subordinates, the Russian hierarchs and the rank and file of the clergy and the lay delegation of the Sobor, was answered by pointing to the provisions of the first Sobor, which, in defining "the rights and duties of the patriarch," had decreed in article 10: "In case the patriarch should infringe the rights or duties of his office . . . he shall be tried by an All-Russian Sobor of bishops, to which, as far as possible, the other patriarchs and representatives of autocephalous churches shall be invited; in such a case the indictment as well as the condemnatory verdict requires not less than two-thirds of effective votes." Thus Tikhon's sentence was affirmed to have been passed in a canonical manner. Moreover, if he felt that the decision of the Sobor was unjust, he could have appealed his case to the next Sobor, but it was uncanonical for him to resume his office in spite of the decision of the Sobor. This statement of the case gains its point by a judicious suppression of certain details of the legislation in question: article 8 of the above-mentioned enactment specifies that

> should the patriarch fail in his duties, then in accordance with the nature of the failure, the three eldest members of the Holy Synod or members of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council of archiepiscopal rank shall make a brotherly representation to the patriarch; in case this should have no result, they shall make a second representation, and in case this also is fruitless, they shall adopt further measures in accordance with article 10.

10. In case the patriarch should infringe the rights or duties of his office, the question whether his acts involve culpability shall be decided by a joint meeting of the Holy Synod and the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council. His indictment and trial devolve upon the All-Russian Sobor of bishops, to which, as far as possible, the other patriarchs and representatives of autocephalous churches shall be invited; in such a case, the indictment, as well as the condemnatory verdict, requires no less than two thirds of effective votes.[2]

From this complete statement it appears that the patriarch's trial and condemnation as actually effected by the Sobor of 1923 did not conform in many particulars to the prescribed procedure.

As for the charges on the basis of which Tikhon was degraded, these, too, were affirmed to have been of canonical validity: in accordance with rule 81 of the *Apostolic Canons,* "it is not proper for a bishop or priest to meddle with the national government, for otherwise he is not to be permitted in the ecclesiastical office. He must either consent not to do so, or otherwise he must be degraded." Since his policy involved Tikhon in constant political activity, which resulted in the death of many members of the church, the patriarch was sentenced to the canonical punishment prescribed in the *Apostolic Canons.* This is another excellent illustration of the loose use of and juggling with canonical provisions, whereby either party may "prove" whatever it pleases: the canon cited really reads as follows:

We have said that a bishop or presbyter must not give himself to the management of public affairs, but devote himself to ecclesiastical business. Let him then

[2] *Regulations,* p. 5.

be persuaded to do so, or let him be deposed, for no man can serve two masters, according to the Lord's declaration.[3]

This rendering makes it perfectly clear that what was prohibited here was the practice so common in the Byzantine Empire of using a bishop as an official of the government, and has no bearing upon Tikhon's case. But in the clash of rival claims between the patriarchal and the synodical party, the contestants do not seem to have been loath to descend to such perversion of the text of the canons, as long as they hoped to score a point thereby.

The patriarchal party, of course, had a comparatively easy task of stating or proving its case. They claimed that the patriarch was not obliged to convene the Sobor within the period of three years, for the provisions of the Sobor of 1917-18 merely implied its convocation within that period, but did not specifically state it as a positive requirement. The patriarch did not surrender his authority to the reformist group, for he could not have done so even if he had wanted to; any definite transmission of authority could be effected only by the Sobor. The party rightfully pressed the point that the action of the reformist group was a plain usurpation, later aggravated by mendacity and deceit. If Agathangel could not come to assume the office, by virtue of the authority committed to him he ruled that each bishop should administer his diocese independently in accordance with the canons until the Sobor could be called to provide lawful central authority. The Sobor of 1923 was uncanonical, and its actions were

[3] *The Seven Ecumenical Councils,* edited by H. R. Percival, in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. XIV; *The Apostolic Canons,* LXXXI, New York, 1900, p. 599.

null and void, because it was not called and presided over by the patriarch as the provisions adopted by the Sobor of 1917-18 specified. It was a partisan group, nonrepresentative of the entire church, and certainly not representative of the patriarchal party, for all who had been sentenced either by civil or ecclesiastical courts were disqualified as candidates for election as delegates to the Sobor, and that provision excluded a great majority of the leading representatives of the patriarchal party, most of whom were thus sentenced, and many of whom were in prison at the time when the Sobor was in session. The trial of the patriarch was a farce, for he neither was apprised of the charges against him, nor was he present to offer a defense; moreover, his trial was not conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Sobor of 1917-18, nor was his case represented by a counsel for defense. The same group which made the charges likewise passed the verdict. Other actions passed by the Sobor were not within the competence of a local, *i.e.* a national body, such as the Sobor was: thus, for instance, it was claimed that only an ecumenical council could change the requirement that the bishop be unmarried, or permit a priest to marry a second time. These actions, therefore, had no validity in the canonical law of the Eastern Orthodox churches, which no single national church was competent to change. Until a lawfully called Sobor, representative of the entire church, shall settle the problems which have arisen in the Russian church, the patriarch remains the only lawful head of the church administration.

Such were the rival claims: since there was a considerable measure of truth in both of them, no wonder that honest men, bent upon doing right, arrived at dif-

ferent interpretations and conclusions about them, and consequently could be found on both sides. But let it not be forgotten that the actual reasons motivating the actions went deeper: they were psychological, one party being conservative and tenacious of the ancient doctrines and usages, the other being progressive-minded, desiring change in polity as well as in doctrine of the church: they were political, the patriarchal party being still largely opposed to the new régime, and even though not solidly monarchical, yet desiring an overthrow of the existing government in favor of one nearer to the Right, while the progressivist groups were all supporters of the new government, and some among them even enthusiastic partisans of its social program, even though all of them made an exception of the anti-religious animus with which the governmental personnel was imbued. The underlying motives undoubtedly also lay in the region of personal ambitions of some of the leaders, who desired power more than they desired the peace of the church.

It may be interesting to cast a hasty glance at the leading personalities of the revolting movement, to get an idea of the motives dominating them. Krasnitsky, as later events proved, was not a man disinterestedly given to the promotion of a great idea which captivated him, and may be presumed to have been actuated by personal ambition; Vvedensky was an impulsive idealist, with tremendous oratorical powers which captivated his audiences; Bishop Antonin was retired shortly after the events of the First Revolution in 1905 for his known liberal tendencies and outspoken advocacy of them, and chafed under this restraint. He had petitioned Patriarch Tikhon to be returned to

active service, but his request was denied; it is only natural to suppose that he joined the revolting movement because it gave him a chance to reassert himself, although this was not his only reason. He, of course, was thoroughly in sympathy with the objectives of the anti-patriarchal program, and saw in it his chance to make his opinions count.

All of these factors contributed mightily to produce the situation which inevitably hurled the church into two hostile camps. And who can say that one party was wholly right and the other wholly wrong?

For the time being, however, the crowd psychology, manifesting itself in a wave of sympathy for the patriarch, who was popularly acclaimed as a confessor suffering for his Christian faith, carried him to a triumphant reassertion of his former influence and power, even though not to the full extent of his former authority. He had the masses with him; the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration might have lodged its adherents in the important cathedras of the church, but they wielded authority without possessing power. They reigned, but did not govern. Their churches, according to reliable witnesses, were sadly deserted, while the patriarchal churches were filled to overflowing. The Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration found itself in an increasingly difficult position: the three groups which represented the bulk of the reformist movement were prone to all kinds of excesses, and were not harmonious in their relations with each other. But their chief fault lay in their inability to recognize the paramount necessity of a unified program, and their ideological diversity tended to split up their forces, so that their impact was not even as effective as it otherwise could have been. Moreover, the leading personalities

of the groups were too strongly inclined to the besetting sin of all reformers: the assertion of their individual views to the extent of attempting to impose their will upon others, without proper regard for the convictions of others. In the case under consideration, this produced personal friction, which under the circumstances was very unfortunate. Men like Krasnitsky and Metropolitan Antonin carried their personal differences to a point where the movement they represented was brought into disrepute.

The increasing pressure of these circumstances produced a crisis so acute that finally it forced upon the reformist forces the conviction that unification was the only possible method of counteracting the disruptive tendencies inherent in the situation. Hence, in August, 1923, at a conference of bishops and other leaders of the three groups, it was decided to abandon the former group form of organization, where the diversity of group platforms tended to produce strife and rivalry, and to organize one single party, which would rest on the principles of democratic, synodical government of the church, as opposed to what was regarded as the autocratic, patriarchal form of hierarchical control. The party acknowledged the Sobor as the supreme legislative organ of the church and, in contradiction to the patriarchal party, professed allegiance to both Sobors, while the latter rejected the second of these. The new organization was joined by the entire group of the *Ancient Apostolic Church,* headed by their leader, Archbishop Vvedensky, and the bulk of the other two groups, the *Living Church* and the *Churchly Regeneration,* although the two leaders, Krasnitsky and Metropolitan Antonin, together with a rather insignificant fraction of their former fol-

lowing, remained outside the new, centralized reformist party, and continued the disruptive policies of their platforms with even greater vehemence than before. Thereupon the title of the governing body was changed from Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration to Holy Synod of the Orthodox Russian Church, and in place of Metropolitan Antonin, the headship of the new supreme government passed to Archbishop Evdokim of Nizhni Novgorod. This important radical reorganization of the entire reformist movement was then approved by the conference held in Moscow from June 10 to 18, 1924, for the purpose of preparing the *agenda* of the next, the third Sobor, which was to be convened in 1925; this conference was attended by 466 delegates, among whom were counted 83 bishops.[4]

The reorganization of the reformist groups into the synodical party, as the new organization can best be termed (although it is also often spoken of as the new-church party) is but imperfectly understood outside of Russia. One constantly hears references to the *Living Church* as if that organization still represented the chief group opposing the patriarchate, or comprised all the anti-patriarchal forces. This is a total misapprehension of the situation, largely due to imperfect acquaintance with the real state of affairs in Russia. The *Living Church* group henceforth ceased to play any important rôle whatsoever, and continued to dwindle, until at the present time it forms quite an insignificant as well as infinitesimal party, still headed by Krasnitsky. For all practical purposes, the organization is quite negligible. Metropolitan Antonin's group, as well as he, also lost almost all its practical significance, and if one might be permitted to anticipate

[4] Cf. *The Messenger of the Holy Synod,* No. 3, 1925, p. 9.

the story for the sake of forming a more complete understanding of the present situation, it may be remarked that in August, 1926, he and the die-hards of his group were received, at his request, into the membership of the synodical party. It would also be unfair to charge the new centralized organization, the synodical party, with the responsibility for the excesses, or questionable actions, committed by the former groups. It is true that the majority of the original membership of the new party came from the three main reformist groups; but the basis of the new organization was different in its emphasis. It laid stress upon the synodical, or representative, principle in church government, and especially upon the provision of the first Sobor which pronounced the supreme authority in the church of Russia to be vested in itself, as well as in future Sobors. The new party professed obedience to the decisions of both Sobors: the first reëstablished the patriarchate; but the second Sobor abolished it. Since the Sobor is supreme, what right did the patriarch have not to submit to it? It was the patriarch who rejected the principle of conciliar supremacy, and therefore responsibility for the schism rested with him. The synodical party freely acknowledged that the reformist groups were guilty of many excesses in the seizure and conduct of church affairs, but it claimed that such actions in no way impaired the canonicity of the Sobor of 1923, and that, in accordance with the ruling of the first Sobor, the conciliar authority, not the patriarchal, was supreme in the church of Russia; hence all members of the Russian church, irrespective of whether or not they agreed with the programs of the reformist groups, were duty-bound to obey the decisions of the Sobors as representing the supreme legislative authority.

The position of the Holy Synod was very considerably strengthened when, in response to its appeal to the patriarch of Constantinople for a judgment regarding the legality of the rival claims of the two parties to the supreme authority within the church of Russia, and with the solemn promise to submit unconditionally to his judgment, that dignitary pronounced in its favor. It must be remembered that "the ecumenical patriarch," as the head of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate is called, in spite of the diminutive authority which he actually wields, is nevertheless held in the highest esteem in the Eastern communions because his see possesses the primacy of honor among them, and exercises the right of appellate jurisdiction, thus being able to act as an umpire in the disputes arising in the autocephalous churches. His judgment, therefore, is really of very great importance.

The history of his decision of the Russian rival claims, however, is typical of the Eastern way of doing things. One ecumenical patriarch first decided in favor of Patriarch Tikhon, but later this decision was reversed by his successor, in favor of the synodical party, thus enabling both rivals to appeal to the decision of the ecumenical patriarch as favoring their contention. This may be Solomonic or may not, but it certainly is not conducive to settling the controversy under consideration. In a statement issued on July 4, 1923, by Patriarch Meletius IV of Constantinople addressed to Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), the former hierarch of Kiev and Galicia was informed of the stand which the All-Orthodox Congress had taken toward the deposition of Tikhon. The Congress expressed its sorrow at the action taken by the Russian Local Sobor in deposing and degrading Patri-

arch Tikhon while "the confessor-patriarch" was in prison, but likewise adopted a resolution "to ask the ecumenical patriarch, along with other Orthodox churches, to investigate the question of the status of the Russian church, in order to afford exact direction to the confused religious conscience of the devout Russian nation, which is suffering from a terrible confusion in matters of faith." [5] Similar pronouncements, some of them very strongly condemning the deposition of Patriarch Tikhon by the second Sobor, were issued by the patriarch of Antioch, Gregory,[6] and Demetrius, patriarch of Serbia,[7] and leave no doubt about the position of these important dignitaries of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Nevertheless, the position of the Constantinopolitan patriarch was reversed by the successor of Meletius, Gregory VII, and his example was then followed by other patriarchs. When Gregory ascended the patriarchal throne, and the Russian Holy Synod appealed to him for a decision of the mooted question which caused schism in the Russian church, he appointed a commission to investigate the real state of affairs in Russia. In his suggestions made to the Constantinopolitan Holy Synod, he advocated that the contemplated commission be given instructions to proceed in compliance with the following principles: that the commission should acknowledge the party which is loyal to the government, and that the group or individuals who meddle in politics and oppose the *de facto* government should not be countenanced by them. In the

[5] *The American Orthodox Messenger,* No. 8-9, Aug.-Sept., 1926, p. 99. (In Russian.)
[6] Dated Oct. 19-Nov. 1, 1923; *ibid.,* pp. 97-98.
[7] Dated Sept. 27-Oct. 9, 1924; *ibid.,* p. 97.

third place, Patriarch Gregory expressed his judgment regarding Tikhon's case as follows:

In view of the difference of opinion which has arisen within the church, we regard it necessary that the most holy patriarch Tikhon, for the sake of uniting the divided church, and for the sake of his flock, should sacrifice himself, and without delay surrender his administration of the church, as is meet for a true and loving shepherd who is anxious for the salvation of his flock; and, at the same time, that the patriarchate be abolished, even though temporarily, as having been born under abnormal circumstances at the beginning of the civil war, and as representing a serious hindrance to the restitution of peace and unity. In place of the abolished patriarchate, the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration shall call a free and canonically elected Sobor, which shall work out the details of the administration of the church in U. S. S. R.[8]

The Constantinopolitan Holy Synod actually acceded to these recommendations of the patriarch, and adopted a set of resolutions very closely following the patriarchal dictum. The second and third articles of these instructions read as follows:

That the commission convey in an appropriate manner the view of the most Holy Synod relative to the necessity of removal of the most holy patriarch Tikhon, and the abolition, even if only temporary, of the patriarchate in the U. S. S. R.; the commission shall organize its work accordingly.

That it make known the view of the ecumenical patriarch that the new regulation regarding the supreme ecclesiastical administration must be based

[8] From the Protocol of the Session of the Constantinopolitan Holy Synod, May 6, 1924; copied from the Russian Holy Synod's Archives; there were three meetings previous to this, which likewise dealt with the question.

upon foundations of purely conciliar ecclesiastical principles, and must have the form of a freely and canonically elected Conciliar Synod.[9]

This action, which was passed in May, 1924, was a signal victory for the synodalist group. It did not, to be sure, represent an out-and-out recognition of its claim; but the unequivocal judgment regarding the necessity of the patriarch's retirement told heavily in its favor.

Tikhon, on the other hand, in spite of his promise to desist from all anti-governmental activity upon his release, had very unwisely, if he meant the promise seriously, surrounded himself anew with persons known to be opposed to the government and of definitely reactionary tendencies; these advisers, then, as might be expected, exerted a great influence upon him, to the detriment of the interests of the church. Under such circumstances, and with the firm conviction of the righteousness of his cause, it was quite natural that Patriarch Tikhon should indignantly refuse to follow the advice of the patriarch of Constantinople regarding his retirement from office, and branded the ecumenical patriarch's action in sending an investigating commission, after a few unsuccessful efforts to persuade Gregory VII to stay the mission, as an act of unwarranted interference in the inner affairs of an autocephalous national church.

But let us permit the patriarch to speak for himself, and to justify, if he can, his rejection of the mediation of the ecumenical patriarch. In answering Gregory VII, Tikhon wrote:

Having perused the above-mentioned protocols, we

[9] *Ibid.*

were not a little saddened, as well as amazed, that the representative of the ecumenical patriarchate, the head of the Constantinopolitan church, without any preparatory correspondence with us as the lawful representative and head of the whole Russian church, should intrude himself into the life and affairs of the autocephalous Russian church. The holy Sobors (cf. the 2d and 3d rules of the II Ecumenical Council, and others) ever acknowledged in the past as well as now that the Constantinopolitan bishop possesses a preeminence of honor above other autocephalous churches, but not of authority. We also recall that rule which specifies that "when not invited, bishops must not go outside the limits of their territory to consecrate another, or for any other ecclesiastical function." Hence any attempt of any commission whatsoever without reference to me, as the sole legal and orthodox primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, is illegal without my authorization, and will not be received by the Orthodox Russian people, and will result not in pacification, but in a still greater disturbance and schism in the life of the already heavily afflicted Russian Orthodox Church. In the end, it will be beneficial only to our schismatical new-churchmen, whose leaders now at the head of the so-called (self-styled) Holy Synod, as the former archbishop of Nizhni Novgorod, Evdokim, and others, are deprived by me of their priestly office, and "till further disposition," on account of the disturbance, schism, and illegal seizure of ecclesiastical government which they effected, are pronounced to be outside the fellowship of the Orthodox church.[10]

This is an admirable statement of the point of view of the patriarchal party, and it is difficult to find any fundamental fault with it.

[10] *The Ecclesiastical Journal* (of Karlovtsi), Serbia, Nos. 7 and 8, 1925. (In Russian.)

Needless to say, the Constantinopolitan commission as well as the patriarch pronounced in favor of the synodical party; furthermore, the patriarch sent to its headquarters his accredited representative. This action, of course, carried with it the recognition of the canonicity of the Sobor of 1923, and as such was a great moral victory for the synodical party, for it most effectually disposed of the disputed question, at least temporarily. The action of the universal patriarch was followed, in the course of time, by his own successors, Constantine VI and Basil III, as well as by a similar recognition and sending of an accredited representative on the part of the patriarchate of Alexandria. The action of the patriarch of Jerusalem also followed the vacillating policy of Constantinople, for at first patriarch Damian pronounced in favor of Tikhon, "who was acknowledged by me, together with all Eastern Orthodox patriarchs, the lawful canonical head of the Orthodox Russian Church, whom we acknowledged to the end of his earthly life." [11] This document was issued on August 25, 1925; but on July 9, 1926, this same Patriarch Damian, in reply to an appeal of the Russian Holy Synod, issued a pronouncement "acknowledging as entirely rightful the course chosen by the Holy Synod for securing peaceful life for the Orthodox church within the boundaries of Soviet Russia." In consequence of this acknowledgment, the patriarch of Jerusalem renewed his brotherly intercourse with the synodical party of the Russian church by sending his representative to the headquarters of the Holy Synod." [12]

[11] *The American Orthodox Messenger,* No. 8-9, Aug.-Sept., 1926, p. 97.

[12] The document was published in *The Messenger of the Holy Synod,* No. 11, 1926.

The only exception among the Eastern patriarchs (not including the heads of autocephalous churches) in granting acknowledgment to the Russian Holy Synod is the patriarch of Antioch, who still persists in his earlier inimical attitude.

Moreover, the Holy Synod found it expedient to adopt a policy of moderation in regard to the method of execution of some of the reformatory legislation passed by the second Sobor; for instance, in the matter of the married episcopate which had caused so much opposition, and had resulted in serious losses to the movement by reason of the charges of uncanonicity and even of heresy, the new administration did not, indeed, abandon the principle of the legislation, but adopted a policy of procrastination in putting it into effect. Wherever the innovation would cause offense to the masses, the Synod desisted from forcing the matter. The whole question was likewise referred to the next (eighth) Ecumenical Council for a final settlement, and the Synod professed to be entirely ready and willing to accept the disposition of the question by the Council. The same policy was adopted regarding the second marriage of clerics and the introduction of the Gregorian calendar: wherever signs of restiveness in regard to the innovations appeared among the people, the matter was dropped, and thus the parishes were practically given a local option to accept or reject the reforms. These opportunist policies were productive of greater stabilization of the position of the Holy Synod.

An interesting episode, characteristic of the kaleidoscopic nature of Russian ecclesiastical politics, and at the same time throwing considerable light upon the psychology of the leading personalities of the various parties, was the reception of the leader of the *Living*

Church, probably the most radical of the former reformist personalities, back into the patriarchal fold, and the positively astounding circumstance that from the beginning he was granted a leading place on the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council of Patriarch Tikhon. On May 19, 1924, Tikhon sent a resolution to his Synod, in which he informed them:

> For the sake of peace and weal of the church, in manifestation of my patriarchal clemency, I agree to receive back into fellowship Protopresbyter V. Krasnitsky. I submit to the Holy Synod the question of his admittance into the membership of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council.
>
> PATRIARCH TIKHON.[13]

This interesting document was passed upon by the patriarchal Synod on May 21, and Krasnitsky found himself a veritable member of the organization which he, more than anybody else, perhaps, helped to undermine. However, he did not permanently remain a member of it. There is not an iota of evidence that Krasnitsky was required to profess any repentance for his wrongdoing, nor was that suggested in the patriarchal message to the Synod. What must have been his feelings to find himself among the formerly so hated "black episcopacy"? What was really back of the astounding transaction? We do not know. But the very fact that Krasnitsky would accept a high position on the patriarchal governing Synod, and that Tikhon was willing to grant it to a man who did not even publicly repent of what must have been regarded as a positive and grievous wrong-doing, throws an unfavorable light on both these important personages.

[13] In *The Messenger of the Holy Synod,* No. 3, 1925, p. 9.

In the meantime, the anti-patriarchal Holy Synod went on with its labors and gradually was able to overcome the inauspicious circumstances into which the initial popular landslide of sympathy for the patriarch had thrown the reforming groups. In February, 1925, Metropolitan Benjamin of Leningrad—a man of great personal charm and one of the eldest of the hierarchs of the pre-revolutionary ordination—displaced Metropolitan Evdokim as the head of the Holy Synod. The party had been growing steadily and organized its work on a plan which was certain to strengthen its influence, that of organizing regional administrations, somewhat on the plan which the Russian government had adopted regarding the various nationalities within the confines of the state. The administrations were granted inner autonomy, although they were outwardly bound by recognition of the decrees of the Sobor of 1923. Thus arose the regional Ecclesiastical Administration of the Ukraine, of Siberia, of the Far East, and of White Russia, as well as the foreign eparchies, as in North America and in Western Europe. Gradually, the great country comprising the Union of Soviet Socialistic Republics was partitioned ecclesiastically, the bulk of Tikhon's following remaining in the North and the Central part of Russia (with Moscow almost solidly in their possession), while the synodical party claimed the allegiance of White Russia, the Ukraine, the Volga regions, Siberia, and the Far East.

The Holy Synod likewise organized a theological academy with the means promised and partly paid by Bishop Blake; this first and only theological academy was housed in the headquarters of the Holy Synod, in Troitskoe podvor'e in Moscow, and resumed, even though under most discouraging and difficult condi-

tions, its work of educating the future priesthood of the Russian church. The work suffered most acutely because of lack of funds, the students were housed in the basement, where they lived under wretched, unhealthful conditions, and the professors were paid a pittance, and not always regularly. Later, a second theological academy was opened in Leningrad.

The patriarchal party suffered a very serious loss in the removal by death from the leadership of the party of Patriarch Tikhon. As already pointed out, much of the popular allegiance to the party was really personal devotion to the patriarch, who was regarded as a martyr suffering for the faith. He died on April 7, 1925, at eleven forty-five P.M., after an illness which necessitated his removal to a hospital. He was apparently recovered to the extent that on the day of his death he had expected to return to the Donskoy Monastery, when complications set in which terminated his life; he seems to have died of heart failure. He was interred in the Winter Chapel of the Donskoy Monastery, on the outskirts of Moscow, which he had made his residence since his return from prison. At the time appointed for the funeral, such enormous crowds gathered to pay the departed primate their tribute that it took the entire day to permit the people to pass the casket in which the body lay. Eye-witnesses describe the scene as most impressive, for throughout the long day, as the enormous crowd passed by one by one, not a sound was heard; all passed on, awed into solemn silence.

The patriarch was buried under the stone pavement of the unpretentious old Winter Chapel of this monastery, which dates centuries back, and over the place was erected a simple, altar-like structure, which is kept

constantly decorated with green branches and flowers, with a motley array of lamps suspended over it. At present, there is exhibited within this enclosure under a glass globe Tikhon's white patriarchal cowl, reputed to have belonged to the famous Patriarch Nikon. Back of it are Tikhon's cross and crozier. People come and prostrate themselves before this structure as if before a shrine of a saint, and it would not be surprising if that proved to be the final outcome of the career of the patriarch.

Those who knew Patriarch Tikhon's life after his release from prison bear testimony to the fact that he honestly kept the promise made at that time no longer to continue the anti-governmental policies of the earlier period of his administration. This is the witness of no less an authority than the vice-president of the U. S. S. R., Peter G. Smidovich, in charge of the department of ecclesiastical affairs, given in a personal interview with the writer. He summed up his judgment of Tikhon by saying that he was an honorable man who kept his promise, but his associates were not in sympathy with that policy and often were able to circumvent the patriarch's intention. Smidovich said that at first he had mistrusted the patriarch, but after he held a personal interview with him he became convinced of the honesty of Tikhon's personal intentions; but he also perceived that the patriarch was too weak to make his own will supreme, permitting himself to be thwarted much of the time by his associates. The sincerity of the patriarch is abundantly attested by the famous document which was prepared by him shortly before his death, although it was not published until after his decease; it came to be known as the patriarch's "Last Will." This most important historical evidence of the

attitude of the patriarch toward the state, and his solicitude for the resumption of normal relations on the part of the church and in view of the new conditions surrounding it, is worthy of full quotation as it appeared in the *Izvestiya*.[14]

By the grace of God, humble Tikhon, the patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia.

Grace and peace from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

During the years of the great civil upheavel, in accordance with the will of God without which nothing happens in this world, the Soviet government became the head of the Russian state, and took upon itself a heavy responsibility—the removal of the burdensome consequences of the bloody war and of the terrible famine.

Entering upon the administration of the Russian state, the representatives of the Soviet authority issued, in January, 1918, a decree concerning the full liberty of the citizens to believe as they please and to live in accordance with that faith. In such manner, the principle of liberty of conscience, affirmed by the Constitution of the U. S. S. R., guaranteed to every religious society, and in that number to our Orthodox church, the right as well as the possibility to live and to conduct its religious affairs in conformity with the demands of its faith, so long as they did not infringe upon public order and the rights of other citizens. Therefore, we have acknowledged to the whole nation, in its time, in our messages to the hierarchs, priests, and their flocks, the new order of affairs as well as the Workers-Peasants' government as a government which the nation sincerely welcomed.

It is time that the believers understand the Christian point of view, that "the destiny of nations is directed

[14] No. 86, April 15, 1925.

by the Lord," and to accept all that has come to pass as the expression of the will of God. Without sinning against our faith or church, without surrendering anything of them, in a word, without permitting any compromises or concessions in the realm of belief, in our relation as citizens we must be sincere in our attitude toward the Soviet government and the labors of the U. S. S. R. for general welfare, conforming the outward form of church life and activity to the new governmental order, condemning all association with the enemies of the Soviet government and all open or secret agitation against it.

Offering our prayers for the outpouring of God's blessings on the labors of the nations which have united their forces in the name of common good, we call upon all beloved members of the God-protected Russian church in these responsible times of upbuilding of the common welfare of the nation, to unite with us in a fervent prayer to the Highest for granting aid to the Workers-Peasants' government in its labors for the good of the masses of common people. We call upon the parochial societies, and especially upon their executive officials, not to admit any individuals of anti-governmental inclinations, nor to nurture hopes for the restoration of the monarchical system, but to become convinced that the Soviet government is actually the national Workers-Peasants' government, and hence durable and stable. We make an appeal that worthy people, honorable and devoted to the Orthodox church, not meddling in politics and sincerely loyal to the Soviet government, be chosen for parochial councils. The activity of the parochial societies must not be exhausted in the political game, which is utterly foreign to the church of God, but in the strengthening of the Orthodox faith, for the enemies of the holy Orthodoxy are the sectarians, the Catholics, the Protestants, the new-churchmen (the synodical party), the atheists,

and such like, who endeavor to use every opportunity which offers itself in the life of the Orthodox church for its injury. The enemies of the church adopt all kinds of deceit, compulsion, as well as bribery, in their efforts to reach their goal. It suffices to look upon the events in Poland, where out of the three hundred and fifty churches and monasteries existing there, only fifty are left. The rest were either closed or turned into (Catholic [15]) churches, not to mention those persecutions to which our Orthodox clergy was subjected.

Now we, by the grace of God, having regained health, again entering upon the service of the church of God, call upon you, beloved brethren-hierarchs and priests, once more condemning all opposition to the government, as well as all evil-intentioned projects, sedition, and all hatred of the government, to devote yourselves to the work of pacification of your flock and of edification of the church of God.

In deference to the duty incumbent upon us to guard the purity of church life, seeking first of all the salvation of men and the realization in life of the eternal divine principles, we cannot but condemn those who, in forgetfulness of the divine ends, misuse their ecclesiastical position by giving themselves beyond measure to the human, and often degraded political game, sometimes even of a culpable character; therefore, in accordance with the duty of our office as primate, we approve of appointing a special commission to be charged with the investigation, and if deemed proper, even removal from office, in accordance with the canonical rules, of those hierarchs and priests who persist in their perversity and refuse to manifest a repentance of it before the Soviet government, and to bring such before the tribunal of the Orthodox Sobor.

At the same time, we must mention with a deep sorrow that certain sons of Russia, and even hierarchs and

[15] Inserted by the translator.

priests, have left the fatherland for various reasons, and already have busied themselves in activities to which they have not been called and which in any case are injurious to our church. Making use of our name and our ecclesiastical authority, they have carried on harmful and counter-revolutionary activity. We positively declare that we have no connection with them, as our enemies affirm; they are strangers to us, and we condemn their harmful activity. They have freedom of conviction, but they use our name and the name of the holy church in an unauthorized fashion and against the canons of our church, feigning to be solicitous about its good. The so-called Sobor of Karlovtsi brought no blessing to the church or the nation, and we again confirm its condemnation, and hold it necessary to proclaim firmly and positively that any such further attempt will call forth on our part extreme measures, even to the forbidding of the ministry and trial by the tribunal of the Sobor. In order to avoid such severe penalties, we call upon all hierarchs and priests abroad to cease their political activity in connection with the enemies of our nation, and to have the manliness to return to the fatherland and to speak the truth about themselves and the church of God.

Their activity should be investigated. They should give an account of themselves to the Orthodox ecclesiastical conscience. We order that a special commission should investigate the activity of the hierarchs and priests who have fled abroad, and especially of Metropolitan Antony, formerly of Kiev; Platon, formerly of Odessa, as well as others, and immediately to prepare a statement concerning their activity. Their refusal to submit to our demand will oblige us to judge them in their absence.

Our enemies, endeavoring to separate us from our beloved children, the priests entrusted us by God, are spreading lying rumors that we are not at liberty in our

patriarchal office to speak freely, and even are not free in conscience; that we are controlled by the presumptive enemies of the people and deprived of the possibility of having communication with the flock we lead. We declare all such inventions regarding our lack of freedom to be lies and seduction, for there is no government upon the earth which could bind our sacerdotal conscience or our patriarchal word. Fearlessly and trustfully looking toward the future course of the holy Orthodoxy, we humbly beseech you, our beloved children, to guard the work of God, and the sons of lawlessness will have no success.

Calling God's blessing upon the hierarchs, priests, and children who are faithful to us, we beseech you with a peaceful conscience, without fear of sinning against the holy faith, submit yourselves to the Soviet government not out of fear, but because of conscience, remembering the words of the Apostle: "Let every soul be obedient to those who rule over them; for there is no government, but is ordained of God—and the governments that be are of God." (Rom. xiii. 1.)

At the same time we express a firm belief that the establishment of pure and sincere relations will prompt our government to deal with us with full confidence, and will give us the possibility to teach our children the law of God, to open theological schools for the training of priesthood, and to publish books and journals in defense of the Orthodox faith.

May the Lord strengthen you all in devotion to the Orthodox faith, church, and its hierarchy.

PATRIARCH TIKHON

Donskoy Monastery,
April 7, 1925.[16]

Such was the astounding document which appeared immediately after the patriarch's death and stirred

[16] *The Messenger,* No. 3, 1925.

more excited comment even than did his "Confession," published upon his release from prison. As might be expected, those who did not choose to follow the patriarch's changed policy regarding the recognition of the Soviet government instantly came forward with the theory of a forgery. They worked out a hypothesis that, during Tikhon's illness, and possibly very shortly before his death, this document was drawn up and his signature forged. They especially appealed, in support of their claim, to the fact that the document purported to have been signed in the Donskoy Monastery, to which the patriarch did not return from the hospital, but to which only his dead body was carried.

All such allegations, however, are too weak to withstand the reasons for regarding the proclamation as genuine. The strongest of these is that the document was sent to the editors of the *Izvestiya* by the successor to Tikhon's office, Metropolitan Peter, and by Metropolitan Tikhon of Ural. Their letter reads as follows:

> The Editorial Office of *Izvestiya.*
> Citizen Editor:
> We beg that you do not refuse space in your paper *Izvestiya* to the enclosed proclamation of Patriarch Tikhon, signed by him on April 7, 1925.
>
> PETER, *Metropolitan Krutitsky*
> TIKHON, *Metropolitan Uralsky*
>
> April 14, 1925.[17]

It certainly cannot be supposed that these two strong leaders of the patriarchal party would in any way be connected with a forgery, or that, had it taken place, they would have no knowledge of it. Moreover,

[17] Quoted from *The Messenger of the Holy Synod,* No. 3, 1925, p. 5.

the document was in their possession, and was sent by them to the newspapers rather than published by the government directly. This in itself has considerable weight in witnessing to the authenticity of the document. Moreover, it would not be in the interest of the government to promulgate such a document, for if the government desired the destruction of the church it would attempt to foment an anti-governmental struggle, and would be but poorly served by an attempt to allay it, as the published document does.

As for the dating of the document in the Donskoy Monastery, it must be remembered that the patriarch expected to return there the same day that death overtook him. It is easily conceivable that, with such expectations, he preferred to have the document dated at the place of his official headquarters rather than at the hospital. Moreover, had not his sudden death intervened, this point certainly would not have been raised.

This document, accepting its genuineness, once more confirms the anti-governmental character of the policies of the patriarchal party, even though now the patriarch no longer shared them. There can be no reasonable doubt, accepting the strictures passed by the patriarch himself upon the various attempts of some of the leaders of the hierarchy and clergy to obstruct the working of the new régime, that the condition described by him actually existed.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRESENT SITUATION

The death of Tikhon deprived the patriarchal party of its leader, but did not impair its determination to fight for the cause represented by the departed primate. It may, of course, very well be that the death of Patriarch Tikhon was not received with an altogether genuine grief even in the ranks of the patriarchal leaders, for if it really were true that the party was so thickly honeycombed with persons of anti-Soviet tendencies as the posthumous document of the patriarch would imply, their regret must have been considerably tempered by a feeling of relief, for they must have found the patriarch's policy increasingly irksome.

Within five days after the passing away of Tikhon, his temporary successor, or rather *locum tenens,* was selected in the person of Metropolitan Krutitsky, Peter. The selection was made in accordance with the directions penned by the deceased patriarch on December 24, 1924 (o.s.; Jan. 7, 1925, n.s.), in which he ruled that until such a time as a legal election of a new patriarch could be held, the patriarchal prerogatives and duties were to pass to Metropolitan Cyril, and in case he should be prevented from assuming them, to Metropolitan Agathangel; but if even the latter could not assume the office, then the office should pass to Peter, Metropolitan Krutitsky. Upon the death of Tikhon, a group of fifty-nine bishops approved these

directions and ruled that since neither Cyril nor Agathangel "is at present in Moscow, and cannot assume the duties laid upon them by the above-cited document" (the reason why is not stated), they acknowledged Metropolitan Peter as "the guardian of the patriarchal office."[1] Thus Peter became a temporary successor of Tikhon, until such a time as conditions should permit the calling of a canonically regular Sobor for the election of a patriarch.

The canonical rules specified that the election of a new patriarch must be postponed till forty days after the death of the previous one. But even after the canonical period had elapsed, no Sobor was held, either because the government authorities would not allow any such Sobor to be held, or because so many patriarchal bishops were in prison or in exile that the Sobor would be attended by a mere handful of them, or because the party made no attempt to hold it. It seems that the second of these is the most probable reason.[2] At any rate, Peter was never formally elected to the patriarchal office, and remained merely its guardian, or a *locum tenens*. Although he exercised many prerogatives of the patriarchal office, his legal position, of course, gave him no such authority, for he could claim no such legal prerogatives over the revolting Holy Synod as were claimed by Tikhon by reason of his election by the first Sobor. Thus Peter really became no more than the head of the patriarchal party. The objection to Peter is, therefore, much more serious

[1] *The American Orthodox Messenger,* No. 8, Aug., 1925.

[2] In my interview with Smidovich, head of the department of ecclesiastical affairs, I asked him which of these two alternatives was correct. He replied that he knew of no petition sent to the government, asking for permission to hold such a Sobor; he affirmed that the party as far as he knew made no attempt to hold the Sobor.

than it was to Tikhon: Peter's claims rest solely on the fact that Tikhon had assigned him the position of the *locum tenens,* or practically speaking, had appointed him to it, and that a group of bishops belonging to the patriarchal party had acknowledged this appointment.

The death of Tikhon offered a fair occasion for reunion of the two parties within the Russian Orthodox Church: the split had been caused to some extent by a feeling of personal loyalty to the former patriarch, although also largely by the roughshod methods of the Sobor in 1923 in handling its opponents, as well as by some of its really questionable actions. One of these causes—the personal loyalty to Tikhon—was now removed by his death. The time was opportune to make an attempt to reunite the church.

This opportunity was promptly seized by the synodical party, by making an official tender to the patriarchal party of parleys over the question of reunion. The offer took the form of an invitation to the Third Sobor, planned for the fall of 1925.

> The Holy Synod presumes that it is time to forget the very words of "Tikhonites" and "new-churchmen," [the proclamation goes on] and solely to remember that we all are Orthodox children of one Mother church.
>
> The Holy Synod, in order to terminate the schism within the church, calls in the autumn of the present year an All-Russian Sobor to Moscow, which will be attended by representatives of all Orthodox societies of our land, irrespective of whether they acknowledge the authority of the Holy Synod or not.
>
> The Holy Synod does not regard itself as an immutable organ of the government of the church.

The members of the Holy Synod, each separately and all together, are ready to surrender their places to other workers, who possibly may steer the ship of church better and more faithfully. However, to decide the question of pacification of the church and the organization of a single church administration, it is necessary to call a Sobor.

The significance of such a Sobor may be immense.

The Holy Synod, anxious for every possible needful precaution for the success of the Holy Sobor, turns herewith to all clergy of the Moscow eparchy with an appeal to terminate now our division, and to forget, in the name of Christ the Risen, all our mutual affronts and misunderstandings, and to unite now for the pre-Sobor labors.

This sincere effort to unite the divided church was signed by the president of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Benjamin, as well as the members of the body, and was published on April 30, 1925.[3] It cannot, however, be sufficiently regretted that this outstretched hand was rejected and the offer spurned by the leaders of the patriarchal group. The patriarchal party did not accept the invitation to meet in a general All-Russian Sobor which would put a stop to the schism and devise a common, unified form of church government. The responsibility for the continuance of the schism, accordingly, rests chiefly, if not exclusively, upon them, or possibly upon their leader, Peter.

So the Holy Synod alone continued its preparations for the third Sobor. By its circular of June 13,[4] it again invited the patriarchal party to coöperation, by declaring that

[3] *The Messenger of the Holy Synod,* No. 2, 1925.
[4] No. 2382; in *Ibid.,* No. 4, 1925, p. 2.

Orthodox clerics and laymen who do not acknowledge the Sobor of 1923 may take part in the organizing labors of the eparchial conventions, and in the elections for the Sobor, on equal terms with the rest, in accordance with the conditions which shall be determined by the central authority and announced later.

In case the separatist bishops should refuse to confer with us and the attempts to make connections with the rank and file of the clergy should fail, the eparchial administration should turn directly to the masses of the believers with the appeal to terminate, in the Sobor, the disruption in the church kindled by the "old-church" upper circles.

The first offer, published shortly after the death of Tikhon, was passed over in silence, the leaders of the patriarchal party not deigning to reply. The second public offer, mentioned above, was answered, toward the end of July, by Metropolitan Peter, through one of his clerics, by asking for a private conference between himself and the members of the Synod, in which the matters could be talked over informally. The conference was immediately granted, and the letter informing him of it was personally delivered by a member of the Synod, who had a short talk with the metropolitan on that occasion. The gist of this conversation was that Metropolitan Peter pleaded lack of authority on his part to give his consent even to the principle of reunion, for he claimed to be only an administrative official, without the fullness of patriarchal prerogatives. To decide the question, it would be necessary to call together, and to gain the consent of, all bishops of his party, and since many were abroad and others were in prison, he suggested that the Synod

employ its good offices to secure their release. The representative of the Synod, Archdeacon Dobrov, answered that the Synod had no part in the arrest of these hierarchs, and could take no part in attempting to secure their release, for the charges against them were political. Whether the metropolitan called his hierarchs together or not does not appear; but he sent no reply to the letter of the Synod.[5]

To the general surprise, however, it was learned that Peter, in spite of his alleged lack of authority in the matter, had already made public a proclamation (dated July 28; the conversation with Dobrov took place on July 29) in which he assumed a very pronounced attitude against the projected Sobor. After paying a few "compliments" to the Roman Catholics and the sectarians, he devoted the bulk of his proclamation to the synodical party. In part, he said:

At the present time the so-called new-churchmen more and more discuss the matter of reunion with us. They call meetings in cities and villages, and invite Orthodox clerics and laymen to a common adjudication of the question of reunion with us, and to prepare for their pseudo-Sobor which they are calling for the autumn of this year. But it must be clearly recalled that according to the canonical rules of the Ecumenical church such arbitrarily gathered councils as were the meetings of the *Living Church* in 1923, are illegal. Hence the canonical rules forbid Orthodox Christians to take part in them and much more to elect representatives for such gatherings. In accordance with the 20th rule of the Council of Antioch, "no one is permitted to call a Council alone, without those bishops who are in charge of the metropolitanates." In the holy church of God only that is lawful which is

[5] *Ibid.*, No. 7, 1926, p. 5.

approved by the God-ordained ecclesiastical government, preserved by succession since the time of the apostles. All arbitrary acts, everything that was done by the new-church party without the approval of the most holy patriarch now at rest with God, everything that is now done without our approval—of the guardian of the patriarchal throne, acting in conjunction with all lawful Orthodox hierarchy—all this has no validity in accordance with the canons of the holy church (An., rule 34; Antioch, rule 9), for the true church is one, and the grace of the most holy Spirit residing in it is one, for there can be no two churches or two graces. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all." (Eph. iv. 4-6.)

The so-called new-churchmen should talk of no reunion with the Orthodox church until they show a sincere repentance of their errors. The chief of these errors is that they had arbitrarily renounced the lawful hierarchy and its head, the most holy patriarch, and attempted to reform the church of Christ by self-invented teaching (*The Living Church*, No. 1-11); they had transgressed the ecclesiastical rules which were established by Ecumenical Councils (the pronouncements of the pseudo-Sobor of May 4, 1923); they had rejected the government of the patriarch, which was established by the Sobor and acknowledged by all Eastern Orthodox patriarchs, *i.e.* they had rejected what all Orthodoxy accepted, and besides, they had even condemned him at their pseudo-Sobor. Contrary to the rules of the holy Apostles, Ecumenical Councils, and the holy Fathers (Apostolic rule 17, 18; Sixth Ecumenical Council, rule 3, 13, 48; St. Basil the Great, rule 12), they permit the bishops to marry and the clerics to contract a second marriage, *i.e.* they transgress what the entire Ecumenical church acknowledges

to be a law, which can be changed solely by an Ecumenical Council.

The reunion of the so-called new-churchmen with the holy Orthodox church is possible only on the condition that each of them recants his errors and submits to a public repentance for his apostasy from the church. We pray the Lord God without ceasing that He may restore the erring into the bosom of the holy Orthodox church.[6]

This is an excellent statement of the case of the patriarchal party, and it may readily be granted that, from the canonical point of view, it is not only most formidable, but positively unanswerable. If canonical considerations alone were to decide upon the merits of the two parties, the patriarchal party would easily secure the victory.

Replying to such a sharp rebuff, the Holy Synod issued three separate proclamations, answering point by point the charges made by Peter, and once more fervently appealing to the masses of the patriarchal party to take the direction of affairs into their own hands, in view of the manifest refusal of their leaders to deal with the question of the existing schism. As might be foreseen, even these attempts were fruitless. Thereupon, the Synod adopted different tactics: in almost all eparchies, similar efforts were made to gain the eparchial authorities, but the results were likewise totally disappointing.[7]

Under such circumstances, the third All-Russian Sobor of the Orthodox church opened its sessions on October 1, 1925, in that cradle of the reformist movement, the church of Christ the Savior. It was attended

[6] *The American Orthodox Messenger,* No. 8, Aug., 1925, pp. 51-52.
[7] Article, "What Was Done for Church Pacification," in *The Messenger,* No. 7, 1926, pp. 5ff.

by one hundred and one bishops, archbishops, and metropolitans, one hundred and twenty priests, and one hundred and twenty-four laymen, all of whom were official representatives, with the right to vote; but aside from these there were twenty-five in attendance who did not possess the right.[8] The presidium of the Sobor consisted of the president, Metropolitan Benjamin of Leningrad, and an honorary president, the ecumenical patriarch, Basil III, of Constantinople (not present); representatives of the Constantinopolitan and Alexandrian patriarchs were honorary members of the presidium; besides these, there were eleven aids to the president, the secretary, Professor B. V. Titlinov, and his six aids.

In the first business meeting, held in the evening, the Sobor adopted a loyal address to the government, in which, in spite of the sincere and firm ring of the declaration, the objectionably over-fervent, exaggerated phraseology of a similar declaration adopted by the second Sobor was markedly omitted. The calm tone of confident loyalty graces it throughout. Thereupon greetings were read from the Constantinopolitan patriarch Basil III, as well as the autocephalous and autonomous parts of the All-Russian Orthodox Church.

Among the first questions to which the Sobor turned its attention was the existing position of the Russian church, in particular the relation of the synodical to the patriarchal party. After a long discussion of this theme, a group of forty-two delegates made a motion that the Sobor make a final attempt to secure reunion by sending a special delegation to Peter to invite him to take part in the work. It was then, however, that

[8] For the names of all these delegates, see *The Messenger,* No. 6, 1925, which gives the official report of the acts of the Sobor.

it was found that an unofficial delegation (not of members of the Sobor, but of laymen from the various synodical congregations of Moscow) had already visited Peter with the same request. The delegation was received by him on October 1, but Peter definitely refused to coöperate with the Sobor, giving the following reasons for his action: the third Sobor was a pseudo-Sobor; the synodalists had usurped the supreme authority; Bishop Antonin, in his day, had no right to organize the Supreme Administration, because he was at the time retired from active service; the Supreme Administration had uncanonically retired, during 1922, a large number of loyal hierarchs; the married episcopate is uncanonical; the Sobor of 1923 had no right to deprive Tikhon of his office and his monastic orders, and had infringed other ecclesiastical rules besides. The metropolitan demanded as a condition of reunion that the synodical party prove itself worthy of forgiveness by a public confession of its guilt.[9] Thus, on the whole, nothing new was added to Peter's previous objections.

Thereupon the Sobor passed its decision upon the matter, expressing, in the first place, its regret that all its efforts to bring about a reunion with the patriarchal party "have met with a stubborn resistance on the part of the leaders of that group of the church which is following the former patriarch Tikhon." The Sobor furthermore stated that in the majority of cases where the patriarchal bishops were invited by the synodical party to a conference, they not only refused but even forbade their clergy and flocks to take any part in the Sobor. Then it was again suggested that the underlying reason for such an attitude on the part

[9] *The Messenger,* No. 6, 1925, p. 13.

of the patriarchal party was not the matter of the alleged uncanonicity of certain acts of the second Sobor, but their championship of the "monarchical principle." For its part, the Holy Sobor stated that it regarded its means of persuasion as exhausted, and came to the conclusion that all further appeals and applications to the Tikhonite hierarchy were in vain so long as they did not abandon their political activity and did not return to the Christian understanding of the ecclesiastical labors.

As long as a considerable group of the old-churchmen is not initiated into the politics of their leaders, and does not partake in it, so long the Holy Sobor with peace and love calls that part of the believers as before to peace and unity, and to a common conciliar adjudication of all purely ecclesiastical differences, in the spirit of the love of Christ.[10]

As the second distinct affirmation of the Sobor of 1925, a general approval of the actions taken on the part of the reformist groups in the matter of retirement of Patriarch Tikhon in 1922 was voted, and the organization of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Administration was pronounced "legal," and the Sobor of 1923 convoked by this Administration was affirmed likewise "canonical and legal."[11] But the next paragraph of this same pronouncement speaks volumes regarding the changes of orientation which had occurred in the leading personalities of the synodical party since the days when the reformist groups were in the saddle; it was specifically stated that

the holy Sobor regards it as necessary to declare that the Orthodox church, headed by the Holy Synod, defi-

[10] *Ibid.*, No. 6, 1925, p. 14.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

nitely separates itself from such irresponsible ecclesiastical groups and representatives as is Protopresbyter Krasnitsky, who a long time ago left the main ecclesiastical channel, or Bishop Antonin, who likewise for a long period had no relationship with the Holy Synod; and the Holy Synod is responsible neither for their representations or actions, nor for their dishonoring of the dignity of the ecclesiastical orders.[12]

Strong words, those, to be officially spoken about the former leaders of the reformist movement!

Of very great importance were the decisions regarding the canonicity of the married episcopate: the third Sobor, in the first place, confirmed the decisions of the second Sobor in placing the married episcopate on an equality with the unmarried, and likewise permitted the clerics to enter a second marriage; furthermore, it was affirmed that these matters were within the jurisdiction of a local (national) Sobor, and thus no illegality whatever had been committed by the second Sobor in dealing with the matter; nevertheless, "the Holy Sobor at the same time holds it its duty to present the decisions regarding this subject of the Sobors of 1923 and 1925 for the consideration of the coming Ecumenical Council, and expresses its readiness to submit to the decision of that Council, in so far as that decision shall be binding upon all Orthodox churches."[13] This was probably the most effective way of handling a matter which had occasioned the party much loss and criticism, and removed one of the serious obstacles which stood in the way of reunion of the two parties within the church. A similar action was taken regarding the adoption of the

[12] *Ibid.*, No. 6, p. 18.
[13] *Ibid.*, No. 6, 1925, p. 18.

Gregorian calendar: the matter was left to the option of the local groups, and its final adjudication was deferred to the decision of the Ecumenical Council. It must be conceded that this wise moderation should have carried conviction that the Holy Synod was actually bent upon a policy of conciliation and of reëstablishment of peaceful relations.

The Soviet government had early adopted the policy of recognizing the principle of self-determination of nations within the limits of a strict economic unity, and freely permitted the formation of national units into autonomous states or self-governing territories. This was a wise policy, which yielded the government added stability, because it satisfied the various self-conscious national units which were long either in revolt against, or restive under, the imperial policy of russification of the non-Russian peoples within the Empire. Ukrainians had strongly felt the injustice of this russification policy, and the change adopted by the Soviet authorities had gone far toward conciliating Ukraine to the new régime.

The same feeling rankled in the bosoms of the Ukrainian patriots regarding the subjugation of the metropolitanate of Kiev to the Moscow patriarch, which occurred in 1686. It was, therefore, perfectly natural that their autonomic aspirations should be extended to the field of ecclesiastical administration, and the synodical party gained greatly by acknowledging the justice of these aspirations. In May, 1925, the Ukrainians held a local Sobor, at which they proclaimed their church autocephalous, although in communion with the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. This action received official confirmation at

the third Sobor of the Russian church, thus completing the transaction.[14]

It would be interesting to cast a glance at the general ecclesiastical situation in Russia as reflected in the statistics published about the time of the meeting of the Sobor, because in spite of their admitted incompleteness, they yet afford some idea of the then existing conditions. According to the official governmental statistics,[15] there were in October, 1925, in 48 *gubernias* (out of the total of 87; the rest failed to report) of Russia, 34,597 congregations all in all. Out of these, 28,381, or 82 per cent, belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church; 1,647, or 4.8 per cent, to the Old-Ritualists; 639, or 1.8 per cent to the Evangelicals; 141 or 0.4 per cent, to the Roman Catholic; 267, or 0.8 per cent, to the Lutherans; 673, or 1.9 per cent, to the Baptists; 418, or 1.2 per cent, to the Jews; 1,818, or 5.3 per cent, to the Mohammedans; and 613, or 1.8 per cent, to other unclassified religious bodies.[16]

It is apparent from these figures that the Orthodox congregations have an absolute majority of 82 per cent, the rest comprising the remaining 18 per cent. As for the relative density of the religious organizations, 41.6 per cent of the *gubernaias* have an average of 40-50 congregations to each 100,000 inhabitants; but in the scantily settled Kirghiz *gubernias* there is the minimum of 14 congregations to the same number of inhabitants. In 5 *gubernias,* among 100,000 people there exists the low number of congregations ranging from 21 to 30: these are the thinly populated regions of

[14] *Ibid.,* No. 6, 1925, p. 26.

[15] *The Statistical Review,* published by the People's Commissariat of Domestic Affairs, July-Sept., 1925.

[16] *Ibid.,* pp. 22-23.

Votskaya Oblast (23), Northern Caucasia (27), the *gubernias* of Vyatka (30), Novonikolaevsk (29), and Altai (29). On the other hand, the greatest number of religious organizations in relation to the same number of inhabitants is found in the *gubernias* of Yaroslavl (65), Arkhangelsk (68), Orenburg (69), Vladimir (79), and Murmansk (223). The last named, so markedly out of proportion with the rest, is an enormous territory with a total of 17,918 inhabitants, and the proportional number may be misleading, for in reality there exist only 40 congregations; but when the index is taken by using 100,000 inhabitants as a unit of comparison, it yields the above-given figure.

The overwhelming majority of the religious organizations (95.6 per cent) possess a regular place of worship. Of the Russian Orthodox, 99 per cent conduct their worship in church-buildings; among the Mohammedans, 97.7 per cent are thus provided for; among the Catholics, 92 per cent; among the Lutherans, 90 per cent; among the Jews, 81.2 per cent; of the Evangelicals, 40 per cent, for many of them meet in private homes; the Baptists have the lowest number, 34.4 per cent.[17]

Another interesting item, effectively dealing with the many exaggerated reports current abroad concerning the high percentage of former church buildings converted to other—often unworthy—uses, is an itemized statement regarding the total number of church buildings converted to other uses, and the purpose to which they were devoted: there were 1,003 Orthodox churches thus confiscated, of which 114 were converted into schools, 195 into club rooms, 280 used for other educational purposes, 79 for industrial and residential

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

purposes, 298 were left unused, and 6 demolished because they were condemned as unsafe, while 31 were not reported upon. Of the Mohammedan places of worship, 29 were confiscated, and of this number 2 were converted into club rooms and 27 remained unused. Of the places of worship belonging to the Old-Ritualists, 27 were appropriated, of which 5 were converted into schools, 1 into another educational institution, 10 used for industrial or residential purposes, and 11 remained vacant. Of all the rest of the communions, 29 places of worship were confiscated, of which number 3 were turned into club rooms, another 3 were devoted to other educational purposes, 14 to industrial and residential purposes, and 9 remained unoccupied.[18] It ought to be remarked, however, that these reports cover only 29 *gubernias,* which is only one-third of the total; so that the information thus offered is seriously defective because of its incompleteness, and the same, to a less degree, applies to the entire report. Nevertheless, that is the only information of the kind available, and in spite of its admitted defects, affords a certain rough basis for estimating the general conditions.

Although the patriarchal party published no statistics regarding its strength, some notion of the relative numbers of the two factions of the Orthodox group may be gathered from the official statistics of the synodical party. The itemized figures published in *The Messenger*[19] report that on October 1, 1925, that branch of the Orthodox church was divided into four autonomous organizations: the Georgian Church, the Ukrainian Church, the White Russian Church, and the Rus-

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 26.
[19] No. 7, 1926.

sian Church under the leadership of the Holy Synod. The Georgian Church had pronounced its autonomy in 1917, having ignored the existing authorities; since then it is not in canonical relations with the Russian Church. The Ukrainian Church had pronounced itself autocephalous on May 8/21, 1925, and this status had been confirmed by the third Local Sobor of the Orthodox Churches in the U. S. S. R. in October, 1925. The Ukrainian Church is governed by an Ukrainian Sobor and its own Holy Synod. Members of the Ukrainian Church have the right to attend, as delegates, the Local Sobors of the Orthodox Churches in the U. S. S. R., and three representatives of the Ukrainian Holy Synod are members of the All-Russian Holy Synod. The Ukrainian autocephalous church comprises 16 eparchies, with 33 bishops and 3,000 congregations.

The White Russian Church has become autonomous since May, 1924; it is governed by a White Russian Sobor and its own Holy Synod; it likewise has the right to send delegates to the All-Russian Sobors, and its representatives have a seat in the All-Russian Holy Synod. It comprises 4 eparchies, with 6 bishops and 500 parishes.

Under the direct supervision and control of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church are the churches abroad, in America, in France, in Germany, in Denmark, and in Athens, as well as 87 eparchies within the territory of the U. S. S. R., which are organized into 7 district metropolitanates: the Siberian, the Far-Eastern, the North Caucasian, the Crimean, the Trans-Caucasian, the Ural, and the Northwestern. The total number (even though based upon incomplete statistics) comprising all the bodies above mentioned

is reported as: 108 eparchies; 12,593 parishes; 192 bishops; 16,540 priests.[20] Comparing these figures with those furnished by the government for the entire Orthodox church in Russia, the synodical party would comprise about 43 per cent of the total number of parishes; this conclusion, however, is likely to be incorrect, for the statistics of the synodical party are much more complete, and therefore higher, than for the rest of the church. Hence it would appear that to estimate the synodical strength at one-third of the total would likely be nearer the truth. Even at that the figures, considering the conditions and circumstances, are extremely favorable to that party.

Returning now to the course of events: shortly after the close of the third Local Sobor, the ecclesiastical circles were again agitated by a startling occurrence, namely, the arrest of the patriarchal *locum tenens*, Metropolitan Peter. At first newspapers published sensational articles regarding the alleged disloyal conduct of the metropolitan;[21] thereupon a representative group of perturbed bishops of the party, filled with easily intelligible anxiety for the welfare of the church, which was sure to suffer for the acts of Peter, visited him and demanded that he instantly issue a public denial of the charge, in order to avert a repetition of reprisals; the spokesman of the group, Bishop Gregory of Ekaterinburg, also suggested that a council of all the patriarchal episcopacy then found in Moscow be called to pass judgment upon the charges. Peter was reported to have refused these suggestions, saying that "in the last analysis, he alone is responsible for the church, and the council of hierarchs not only would

[20] *The Messenger*, No. 7, 1926, p. 2.
[21] *Izvestiya*, Nov. 15, 1925.

not help him, but would even be injurious."[22] Against this Gregory urged that responsibility for the church rested with the entire episcopacy, whose united voice was far more important than that of any one individual member of it.

Since Peter refused to heed the suggestion of the bishops, there was held, on December 22, in the Donskoy Monastery, a meeting of the episcopacy, which adopted a resolution to the laity and pronounced its members independent of the control of the *locum tenens,* Peter. They organized a new government by electing a temporary Supreme Church Council (Soviet), composed of six hierarchs, which instantly set about preparing for a new Sobor, to be held not later than 1926.

In the meantime, Peter was imprisoned, and subjected to a trial. Unable to exercise the authority delegated to him by the deceased Patriarch Tikhon, he in turn delegated it to Sergei, the metropolitan of Nizhni Novgorod. The majority of the patriarchal party, after a period of hesitation, rallied about Sergei, leaving the Episcopal Soviet with scanty support. Internecine war between the two rival ecclesiastical authorities soon broke out, and ran its usual course: after a great deal of fulmination, Sergei forbade the Episcopal Soviet, as a usurping organization, to exercize any ecclesiastical authority, and upon its refusal, excommunicated its members. Sergei is still regarded as the chief leader of the patriarchal party and is obeyed by the great majority of its adherents. Unfortunately, he cannot remove to Moscow to centralize his authority as the acknowledged leader of the party, for the government refuses him permission to leave

[22] *Ibid.,* No. 5, Jan. 1, 1926.

Nizhni Novgorod.[23] Thus, to a very large extent, each bishop is left to himself to govern his own diocese in accordance with the canons and to the best of his knowledge and ability, without much direction from any central supreme authority.

When a group of Americans visited Metropolitan Sergei in August, 1926, to ask his judgment regarding the Russian church situation, he laid stress on the point that differences between the patriarchal and synodical parties had arisen from the opposite interpretation of the Sobor of 1923, which he pronounced irregular, uncanonically called, packed by forced elections, and its delegates committed against Tikhon in advance. "We regard the adherents of the synodical party as rebels," he affirmed, "although their offense is not in the theological sphere, but in the canonical." Nevertheless, Sergei was rather hopeful that a reunion might be effected. He also asserted that the church was free to worship.

During the summer of 1926, Metropolitan Sergei, in reply to a governmental demand for specification of the patriarchal party's attitude, issued an official declaration, in which he most solemnly declared that the church he represented was non-political, and "in so far as the recognition of the present government was concerned, the Tikhonite church was absolutely loyal." He furthermore reminded the government of the guarantee of religious as well as anti-religious freedom of propaganda, and asked that this particular provision of the constitution be enforced, and the church given full freedom to carry on its normal work. Finally, the

[23] Metropolitan Sergei, since the time of the writing of this chapter, was arrested; Metropolitan Joseph of Nizhni Novgorod, and the Archbishops Cornelius of Ekaterinburg and Thaddeus of Astrakhan, who in turn succeeded him, suffered a similar fate.

metropolitan declared that the émigré clergy was not considered a part of the Russian church, and therefore he had no jurisdiction over it. With this kind of spirit and attitude on the part of the present leaders of the patriarchal party, a change in the treatment of it by the government may ultimately be hoped for. Nevertheless, it is likely to be a slow process.

In the meantime, Metropolitan Peter remained in prison; his trial was slow, and the proceedings were not published. In an interview with Smidovich (on August 18, 1926), who is in charge of the department of ecclesiastical affairs, I asked this high official what the charges against Metropolitan Peter were, and what the prosecution had proven. Smidovich replied that the government agents had gathered their proofs against Peter abroad even before he was arrested, and that the case against him was so overwhelming that he had already confessed to having been in communication with the monarchical organizations abroad, and that he had sent his acknowledgment, together with his blessings, to one of the rival candidates for the Russian throne, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaievich; moreover, Peter had signed his confession, and appended to it a petition professing his repentance and begging for mercy. My request for the court records of the trial, or an official statement of it, was answered by Smidovich to the effect that all documents relative to the trial were to be published in the papers in the near future. But hitherto I have not seen these confirmations, and therefore no judgment in the case can be passed. If the statements should be proven true, one could entertain but little sympathy with the leadership of the patriarchal party; but on the other hand, without impugning Smidovich's veracity or good faith,

anyone who has to do with Russian affairs will soon learn to investigate all the sources available before accepting any oral statements, no matter what their origin.[24]

The patriarchal party is not wholly free: its members do not possess the freedom of organization which their opponents enjoy, for they do not have the right to organize themselves into eparchial units as the synodical church has; moreover, the hierarchs of that party are often hampered in their movements and are never wholly free from the danger of imprisonment. Thus Metropolitan Sergei is not permitted to leave Nizhni Novgorod, as Metropolitan Agathangel had been prevented from coming to Moscow in 1922 when he was summoned by Tikhon to assume the duties of patriarchal substitute. In the summer of 1926, about ten bishops belonging to the patriarchal party were ordered out of Moscow, simply because the authorities were suspicious of them. It is generally known that the official representatives of the patriarchal party regard it as perilous to speak freely with any foreigner for fear that it may arouse the suspicions of the government and lead to unpleasant consequences, and even to forcible measures. I have been repeatedly refused audience with members of this group, solely because they feared to speak with a foreigner. In this respect, the entire party is still resting under the heavy incubus of mistrust and suspicion, and possibly even ill will, which is a heritage from the days when the church was in active opposition to the Soviet régime. Doubtless a long time must elapse and repeated proofs of loyalty and sincerity on the part of the party must be proffered before these conditions may be expected

[24] Since then, Metropolitan Peter has been exiled to Siberia.

to change much. It may be remarked, in this connection, that the patriarchal party shares in this respect the sad fate of all the surviving members of the former bourgeois or ruling classes, who cannot be said to be treated with justice, or even fairness. The Soviet government represents the proletarian dictatorship, and the Marxian gospel preaches class hatred, thus inducing class strife and injustice. The sorry surviving wrecks of the former middle and upper classes, which did not succeed in passing for proletarians, or which were refused such saving transformatory process by the powers that be, suffer injustice in many cases amounting to persecution. The best that can be said about the whole matter is that they comprise the ten per cent of the population which formerly oppressed and exploited the remaining ninety per cent of the downtrodden rural or industrial population, and that they suffer the same treatment at the hands of the victorious majority which formerly was meted out to them. Conditions, of course, have improved, for it is now only ten per cent of the population which is oppressed by the ninety, whose lot has been correspondingly improved; but there is no pretense of mercy about the pitiless process, and the worst that can be said against the Soviet system is that the oppression against which its protagonists had revolted is now practiced by them upon their former oppressors. Unfortunately, two wrongs never make a right.

The synodical party, on the other hand, possesses the confidence of the government, and therefore a degree of freedom which disposes it to a loyal acceptance of the new conditions. The representatives of high official rank with whom I have had personal conferences earnestly urged that the new order is con-

ducive to a truer religious liberty than the former order was, which heaped unjust prerogatives and privileges on the church, but constrained it to do its bidding in every nefarious purpose of its own. This party affirms that there has been no overt persecution of the church, the various penal measures carried out against it having been called out by the disloyal attitude and conduct of the latter. The leaders further zealously affirm that the synodical party does not differ from the patriarchal on questions of dogma or canons, but only in the interpretations of the Sobor of 1923.

Another advantage which the synodical party possesses over the patriarchal lies in the recognition afforded it by the patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. The Holy Synod was requested to send its representatives to the Eighth Ecumenical Council, which after more than eleven centuries' silence is again to speak authoritatively upon the important adjustments which the new age imperatively demands of the Eastern churches. Thus the synodical party possesses at least the initial advantage of representing officially the Russian Orthodox Church at this enormously important gathering.

The synodical party shows a deeper understanding of the necessity of adapting the ancient forms and usages through which Russian Christianity expressed its piety from time immemorial to the new conditions and demands, and therefore possesses a greater survival power, or even life-energy, than the patriarchal party, which is perforce wedded to the traditional usages and dogmas. There is likewise a greater theological elasticity in the synodical group, even though the party officially has not embraced any tenets at variance with Orthodoxy; besides, there is a feeling of free-

dom regarding the liturgical services, which in places are performed without their former traditional rigidity, but are experimented with in the direction of greater freedom and what may be spoken of as Protestantization, using the word in its best sense. As an illustration of this tendency, I may relate my own observations of the work of one of the Moscow parish representatives of the synodical party, a zealous priest, whose church is situated on the Lyubyansky Square in the very heart of the city. I visited him in his home, and found him a deeply consecrated, spiritual-minded Christian, who drew much of his inspiration from such English religious literature as Drummond's *Greatest Thing in the World.* I was likewise surprised at the emphasis he placed upon Biblical study and preaching, for I was somewhat unaccustomed to associate a Russian priest with such thoroughly "evangelical" ideas. I have attended his church services several times and, although I do not pretend to be able to detect every variation in his service from the traditional liturgical services, I observed at least some of the more striking deviations. The holy doors of the *ikonostasis* were open throughout the service, all prayers were in Russian, instead of Church-Slavonic, and some were not chanted. The chief difference, and a very notable one, came at the time of the sermon: an elderly layman went up to the holy doors with his own Bible in hand, and read in Russian a portion of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, dealing with the Apostle's expostulations about their divisions. The priest then came forward and delivered a twenty-minute sermon—and a very effective exhortation it was—pointing out the unhappy effect of the divisions within the Russian church, for there, too,

many say: "I am Peter's" (*i.e.* belong to the party of Metropolitan Peter), and others: "I am of the synodical party." The preacher exhorted his hearers to eschew all such divisive slogans, and to say: "I belong to Christ!" Even this one sermon was somewhat of an innovation in the Russian service; but this good priest was not satisfied with stopping with one. After the sermon based on the Apostle, the deacon stepped to the lactern and read from the gospels, whereupon the priest again came out and gave another sermon, full of evangelical zeal and real religious fervor as well as of spiritual insight. On the whole, these two sermons were remarkable productions, and considering how comparatively rare homiletical exercises were in the Orthodox service, this must be hailed as a distinct advance upon the previous practice. Attending the evening services, I learned that they consisted largely of expository Biblical preaching, with hardly any liturgical accompaniment, and although it is a mere detail of no particular consequence, yet it was of interest to note that the Western customs were followed even to the extent of carrying chairs and benches into the church, and seating the congregation during the preaching service.

This priest also organized the members of his congregation into unions and coöperative societies, and on the whole evinced a remarkable interest and zeal in caring for the social and economic conditions affecting his people. All of this is quite unusual in an old-time parish, and augurs well for the future of the new organization. His parish is a vital factor in the lives of his people, and performs a real service for them. As he told me, "We are poor as our people are poor; but we have gained their love."

The former ecclesiastical exclusiveness has likewise disappeared from the synodical party: I, a Protestant, have been received with the utmost brotherly cordiality, by the rank and file, as well as by priests and the metropolitans. In one of the sermons I heard the matter discussed, and the preacher most positively affirmed that no spiritual division exists between the Orthodox and the sectarians, the Roman Catholics, or the Protestants, provided that the inner bond of spiritual unity is present. That is another hopeful sign. Thus, on the whole, the church has found its proper mission, and there is no cause to despair over it.

Finally, a word ought to be said regarding the present situation of the "sectarians" and their attitude toward the new conditions brought about by the October Revolution. It must be remembered that there are, according to their own estimate, even though it does not represent actual official statistics, some fifteen million sectarians in Russia. Some of them have centuries of tradition and history back of them; others are of a comparatively recent origin. None of them enjoyed full religious liberty under the tsar, while a few of their communions were occasionally cruelly persecuted. Thus, just like the workers and the peasants, by the overthrow of the tsarist régime they had "nothing to lose but their chains," while the new conditions actually brought them religious liberty for the first time. Moreover, although nominally the same laws which affected the Orthodox church had validity for them, the government is credited as having been much more lenient toward them in the execution of those laws than it was toward the formerly dominant, reigning church. Therefore, the sectarians are unani-

mous in their affirmation that their conditions were greatly improved by the October Revolution. I have been present at a conference with the leaders of the chief sectarian communions of Moscow, and have personally heard them bear such testimony, some of the speakers even waxing quite eulogistic.

The most numerous among these non-Orthodox groups, who by a curious psychological twist still persist in thinking and speaking of themselves as "sectarians" in distinction from "the church," although legally the distinction no longer exists, are the Molokane, or as they prefer to call themselves, the Spiritual Christians. They have existed, in spite of all the oppression and persecution, for the last hundred and fifty years, and they differed most radically from the Orthodox because they rejected all outward ceremonies and all sacraments, worshiping God "in spirit and in truth." During the forties of the nineteenth century they suffered most serious persecution, and were exiled into Caucasus and Siberia; yet, in spite of that, they increased their numbers to a million. Then, however, a period of decline set in, during which their best elements were won over by the Baptists. But since the opening of the new century, the Spiritual Christians have experienced a revival, which was evidenced by a steady growth. At present, they number about two millions.

The next communion to rank with the Molokane is the Baptist body, which totals about one and a half millions. Russian Baptists differ markedly from the American Baptists, because their historical origins were native. The movement was originally organized by a certain Pavlov, in Tiflis, Caucasus, among the Molokane settled there, and drew its membership

largely from the latter communion, which was then temporarily in a state of decline; thus its antecedents were native, and of a kind which has no parallel in the history of the Western Baptists. The Stundist movement, which became so prominent in the Ukraine and Southern Russia, also merged with the Baptists, and brought in its own spiritual heritage. A similar movement, under the leadership of Lord Redstock, emerged in St. Petersburg and the North, and assumed the name of the Evangelical Christians. These three strains unite now under the common designation of Baptists. They reject the use of weapons, but are willing to accept other forms of military service, such as hospital duty or any other non-combatants' service. They are very energetic under the new conditions, publishing a journal, and at present opening a theological school for the training of their ministry.

Dukhobors, who number about three hundred thousand, are absolute pacifists, and organize themselves into religious committee. On account of the latter feature, they receive special consideration by the government, which even went so far as to try to induce the Dukhobors of Canada to return to Russia, in order to help spread the communistic ideal.

Besides these, there are the Seventh Day Adventists, Mennonites, Old Israelites, New Israelites, Malevantsi, Tolstoyans, and even a rather new sect of Abstainers, who reject the use of intoxicating liquors, not to mention such sects as Skoptsy, Beguni, etc.

The rate at which the sectarians grow is alarming to the Orthodox church, for their growth, as a matter of fact, is quite remarkable. Some idea of the rate of increase may be gained from the statistics for the *gubernia* of Kiev, in the year 1923: the Baptists

increased from eleven congregations to fifteen, the Spiritual Christians from fifty-nine to one hundred and twenty-eight, the Adventists from one to twenty-four, and the Malevantsi from three to twenty-six.[23]

Hence it is rather easy to understand why the Communist leaders look with a certain degree of favor upon the sectarians, and why the sectarians, on the other hand, are so solidly supporting the new régime. The Thirteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party adopted the following resolution:

> We must pay the greatest attention to the sectarians, who were generally persecuted under the tsar, and some of whom are very active. By approaching them wisely, we must secure their most energetic and cultured elements for our own task. In view of the large number of the sectarians, this work is of great importance. The problem must be solved in accordance with local conditions.

The same favorable opinion was shared by Rikov, Bukharin, Kalinin, and Smidovich, as well as by Lenin. The fact that many sectarians share the communistic ideal with the anti-religiously motivated Communist Party brings them together in attempting to work for that element of their aspirations which they possess in common. No wonder that one of these sectarian leaders wrote me enthusiastically: "I consider the Soviet government the best régime, particularly because it is striving to realize communism, which is also the ideal of all sectarians-communists."

Thus adding the forces of the synodical party of the Orthodox church to the strength of the sectarians, the total number of those who quite loyally accept

[23] *The Messenger of the Holy Synod,* No. 2, 1925, p. 22.

the new régime and regard it as having granted them genuine religious freedom amounts to some forty-five or fifty millions, even though it would be grossly unfair to conclude that the remaining sixty-five millions—more or less—are either disloyal or openly anti-governmental: the simple truth is that too many causes conspire to imbue the authorities with suspicion and even ill will against them.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

The question is often raised as to the future of the Russian church; some timorous and fearful souls affect anxiety regarding the very possibility of its survival, or work themselves into a high state of excitement about the "annihilating" measures of the atheistic propaganda. This view of the speedy demise of Russian Christianity is likewise zealously upheld by those who would find a personal pleasure in attending its funeral; in a personal interview with the president of the Atheist Society, Spitzberg of Moscow, this zealous apostle of atheism gravely assured me that within ten years Christianity will have disappeared from Russia, not because of any governmental persecution, but because the rising generation will have been brought up in knowledge and enlightment, and many of the older folks will have passed away.

Without assuming to play the rôle of a prophet, the question of the survival of Christianity in Russia may be answered by linking it with essentially the same problem confronting Christianity in any other country; the Russian crisis is only an acuter stage of the situation prevailing everywhere else. The forces which confront each other there may be cruder than elsewhere: the spirit of militant atheism finds greater support in Russia than in other countries, but the religious level of Russian Christianity is likewise lower

than in some other lands. But essentially Christianity is everywhere facing the same problem: it finds itself, for the first time in its history, in a scientific-minded world. This scientific spirit may assume the rather crude form of militant materialistic monism, or some more refined expression with which Western Europe and America are acquainted: but fundamentally the assumption of an ordered universe made by these views in which law, and not a miraculous, supernatural caprice, is dominant, more and more differentiates the modern scientific attitude from the pre-scientific supernaturalism which was current throughout the previous epochs of Christian history. Official Christendom is still largely steeped in this pre-scientific ideology, through which it expresses its creed, and thereby puts itself into increasingly disharmonious relation with the modern world-view. Hence the deeper problem which Christianity is facing is whether the pre-scientific type which characterizes some nine-tenths of official Christendom shall be able to survive anywhere, not only in Russia. It seems increasingly clear that it cannot. Therefore, if the question whether Russian Christianity shall be able to survive implies whether its present ecclesiastical organization with its ancient doctrinal formulation and cultus can preserve its exact identity unchanged, the answer is not difficult: as long as the general ignorance hitherto so characteristic of the Russian peasant prevails, no great modification in his religious habits may be expected. If, however, the government succeeds in organizing its educational system in a thoroughgoing manner, and if the younger generation quite generally shares the educational privileges thus provided, there is no doubt that this will imply a considerable change in the religious thinking

of the nation. The situation very likely will then be similar to that in France.

On the other hand, no one need be any more unduly alarmed about the survival value of essential religion, the Jesus way of life, in Russia than in the rest of the world. As a matter of fact, genuine Christianity has never had a better chance to manifest its intrinsic worth in the concrete, practical conditions of Russian life than just now, when it has at last been freed from its forced partnership with its former tsarist ally, by whom it was kept in an unworthy spiritual bondage at the price of material privileges. The new conditions have made it possible for genuine religion to function as a transforming force. If Russian Christianity conceives its mission in terms of a character-building, energizing spiritual force, which transforms human lives from sordid self-seeking to altruistic service of others—elements, which, by the way, are not uncommon in the "atheistic" Russian communism, which nevertheless thinks of itself as irreligious—and if without any interference with the proper sphere of science, it adds to the scientific attitude a passion for a nobler character and a better social order, and a poetic interpretation of the spiritual intuitions of the human race, no one needs to be in anxiety about its survival. But it is as frankly a matter of the "survival of the fittest" in the realm of religion as it is in the realm of physical organisms. Fortunately, this new spirit is stirring within the Russian church as well as elsewhere, in spite of the fact that the ancient good made uncouth by time is still its very formidable enemy. The final outcome of the struggle of the two forces within the Christian church is by no means clear: to assume that the new spirit must necessarily win would imply an

undue and as yet unwarranted optimism, which does not rest its case upon a demonstrable trend of events. Any adequate knowledge of the prevailing situation is certain to dissipate such undervaluation of the strength of the traditional official Christian ideology. Whatever the ultimate outcome may be, the Russian situation is certain to exert its influence either for good or for evil, for it is a part of the whole. It is for the rest of Christendom to help it choose wisely.

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